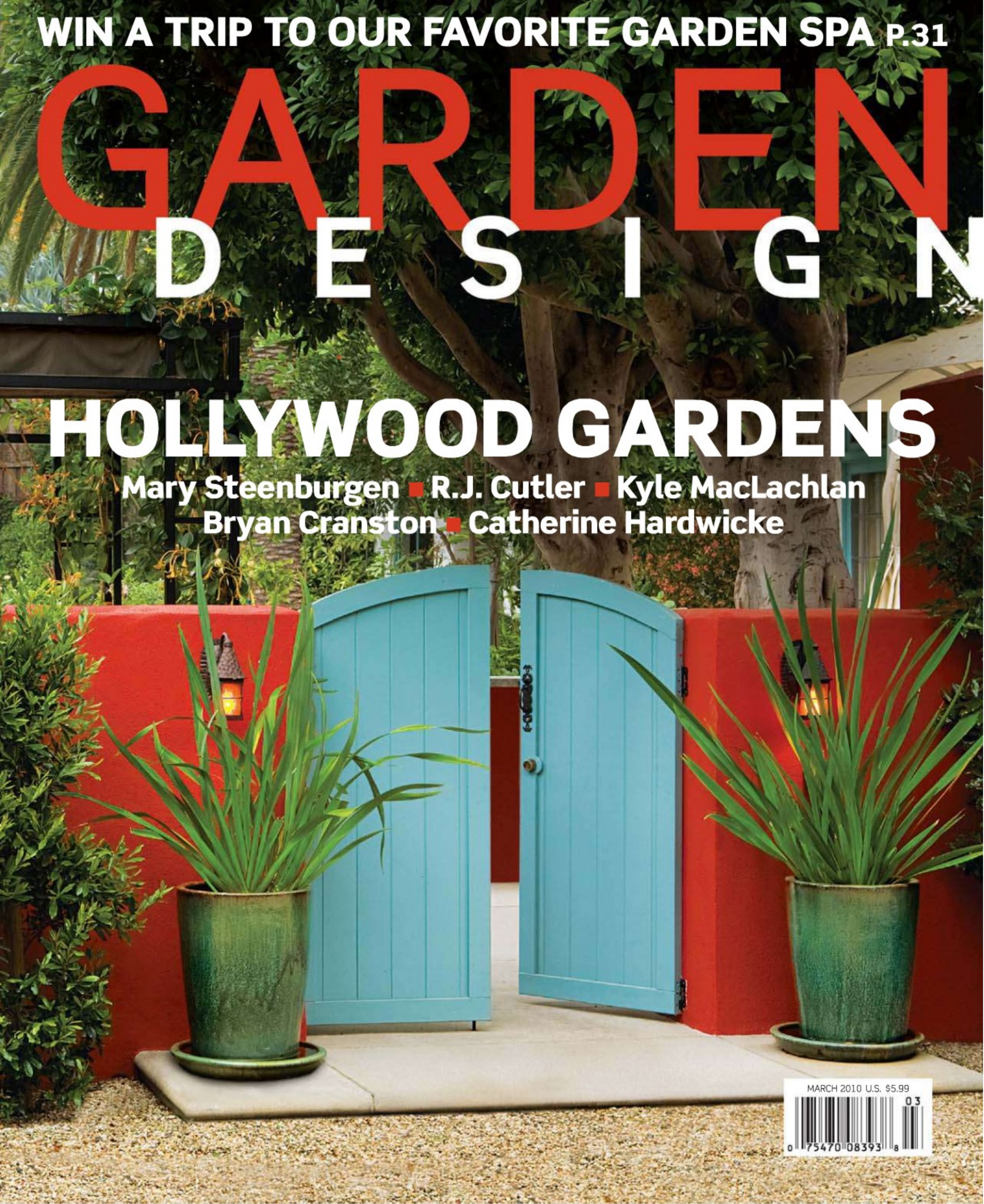
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ON THE COVER
Producer/director R.J. Cutler's garden was photographed by Jack Coyier for our feature "Hollywood Hideaway" on page 64.

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY FLORA; ROB CARDILLO; JACK COYIER (40, 64); HENRY FECHTMAN

GARDEN DESIGN

EDITOR
Sarah Kinbar

FEATURES EDITOR
Jenny Andrews

SENIOR EDITOR
Megan Padilla

MANAGING EDITOR
Leigh Ann Ledford

ART

GROUP CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Dave Weaver

ART DIRECTOR
Donna Reiss

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Larry Nighswander

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR
Chelsea Stickel

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS
Henry Fechtman, Jon Whittle

FREELANCE DESIGNER
Erin Friedmann

COPY

COPY EDITOR
Cindy Elavsky

HORTICULTURE FACT CHECKER
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FACT CHECKER
Rebecca Geiger

EDITOR EMERITUS
Bill Marken

EDITOR-AT-LARGE
Joanna Fortnam

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Charles Birnbaum, Damaris Colhoun, Davis Dalbok, Jason Dewees, Donna Dorian, Ken Druse, Flora Grubb, Lauren Grymes, Louisa Jones, Debra Prinzing, Emily Young

PRODUCTION & DESIGN

GROUP PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
Jeff Cassell

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Courtney Janka

DESIGN SERVICES DIRECTOR
Suzanne Oberholtzer

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
Julia Arana, Sommer Hatfield Coffin, Ashley Cockram, Mike Rettew

CUSTOMER SERVICE & SUBSCRIPTIONS

BUSINESS & EDITORIAL OFFICES
460 N. Orlando Ave., Suite 200, Winter Park, FL 32789

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FOR EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE,
P.O. BOX 8500, WINTER PARK, FL 32790;
EDITOR@GARDENDESIGN.COM;
FAX: 407-628-7061

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GARDEN DESIGN

GROUP PUBLISHER
Brian Doyle
brian.doyle@bonniercorp.com

ADVERTISING SALES/MARKETING

SENIOR ADVERTISING MANAGER
Meshele Conley, 407-571-4616;
meshele.conley@bonniercorp.com

FURNISHING AND DESIGN MANAGER
Jodi Bech, 407-571-4600;
jodi.bech@bonniercorp.com

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE
Noella Darragh, 407-571-4937;
noella.darragh@bonniercorp.com

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE
Laurie Sanders, 407-571-4541;
laurie.sanders@bonniercorp.com

MARKETING MANAGER
Valerie Jones, 407-571-4994;
valerie.jones@bonniercorp.com

ADVERTISING SALES ASSISTANT
Megan Heffner, 407-637-3623;
megan.heffner@bonniercorp.com

LIFESTYLE & SHELTER GROUP

SENIOR DIRECTOR, DIGITAL PRODUCT DEV.
Bill Crosby

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CORPORATE ADVERTISING SALES

VICE PRESIDENT, CORPORATE SALES & MARKETING
Pete Michalsky, 212-779-5112

CORPORATE NATIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER
Jared Kranz, 212-779-5214

LOS ANGELES
Steve Thompson, Media Centric Inc., 415-435-4678

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STARS ... THEY'RE JUST LIKE US



If you didn't know better, a *Garden Design* Hollywood Issue might seem like a flagrant attempt to get attention for something other than great design. But if you've been reading our magazine for any length of time, you know that Southern California is a center of great residential landscapes in the U.S. — a perfect storm of ideal year-round climate, modern design roots and, well, money, makes for a region that is brimming with gorgeous gardens.

The stars are flashy when they walk the red carpet, but our scouting trips in and around Hollywood revealed another side of today's celebrity lifestyles: Their homes and gardens are wonderfully comfortable and possess a soft, dreamlike quality that fosters "getting away from it all." Think about it — when you're home, you really want to *feel* at home. A pristine, over-the-top environment doesn't offer the comfort that the new Hollywood garden does.

Mary Steenburgen calls her garden "tumbly" for its hilly wildflower look. She and husband Ted Danson wanted a distinctly Californian garden on their Ojai property, and that's exactly what landscape architect Pamela Burton gave them. Planted with loads of natives and designed to enhance indoor-outdoor connections and open up views, the garden reflects the couple's "joy of living here," says Burton.

This garden's serenity extends to other landscapes in this issue too. Kyle MacLachlan, Bryan Cranston and R.J. Cutler all have worked with their landscape designers to fashion places they can call home. Note page 54, where a hammock is the centerpiece of a quiet, shady garden made for resting and reading. Would you have guessed that its owner plays a criminal on *Breaking Bad*? And take a look at the outdoor entertaining area on page 64 — a sweet and intimate nook around a fire pit. There lives the producer of *The September Issue*, a film about the making of *Vogue*'s hottest issue of the year.

What I've realized during the creation of our first Hollywood Issue is that when it comes to gardens, whether your name is up in lights or familiar only to people you know, there's no place like home.



SARAH KINBAR/EDITOR

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contributors



When *Garden Design*'s managing editor Leigh Ann Ledford visited two celebrities' gardens with designer Jon Goldstein ("The Makeover Artist," page 50), she didn't expect to be greeted with cappuccino and fresh chocolate croissants. But that's the kind of warmth and approachability she found in Kyle MacLachlan (of *Desperate Housewives* fame) and his garden. "I especially loved this old-fashioned-looking daybed he'd placed in the blue room," a cozy garden space that invites naps and provides the perfect place for reading time with his baby boy.



Down-to-earth celebrities seems to be a theme this issue. When photographer Jack Coyier and his team arrived at the Ojai home of actors Mary Steenburgen and Ted Danson at 4:45 a.m., it wasn't long before Danson was cooking the crew breakfast ("Mise en Scène," page 40). Touring the couple's garden, Coyier says: "Mary and Ted were really into the space. They were keen to show us where and how they've collaborated with the designers, and what they wanted to get out of their landscape."

CHELSEA STICKEL (2); JACK COYIER

GARDEN DESIGN 2010 GREEN AWARDS

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Brought to you exclusively by the editors of *Garden Design* magazine, our second annual awards program reveals the exciting moment when great design meets ecological responsibility. Smart water and energy use, repurposing, recyclables, natives and organics, and other earth-friendly innovations will be recognized.

CATEGORIES:

- ☐ **Residential Gardens**
- ☐ **Public Spaces**
- ☐ **Corporate Landscapes**
- ☐ **Edible Gardens**
- ☐ **Outdoor Products: Furniture, Décor and Lighting**

ELIGIBILITY: Only designers and companies owning designs are eligible to enter this awards program. Entries must highlight key "green" components and should not have previously appeared in a national publication. See online **Rules** for complete details.

TO ENTER: Your online entry should include the following: a completed entry form, 10 uploaded images with captions showing all parts of the completed project (professional images are preferred) and a single-paragraph summary of the project.
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for the transformation of her Phoenix, Arizona, office

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PHOTOS, LEFT TO RIGHT: COURTESY REED HILDERBRAND; TERRENCE MOORE

The Cultural Landscape Foundation



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ROOFTOP EDIBLES ❦ HOLLYWOOD GARDEN DECOR ❦ MODULAR DESIGN ❦ I LOVE THIS PLANT: VIREYAS



Kate Kennan of Winston Flowers designed this garden of edibles for a "concept" penthouse in downtown Boston on the theme of the "urban potager." Holding its own aesthetically as well, the garden used a lively mix of foliage textures and colors including basil, peppers, chard, garlic, eggplant, squash, tomatoes and sweet-potato vine.

uptown harvest

Wouldn't this have been the perfect solution for Mr. Douglas on *Green Acres*? With a sweet setup like this rooftop edible garden, he could have puttered in his vegetable patch and still kept the penthouse view his missus adored. Created by Kate Kennan of Winston Flowers, the garden was the outdoor component for a concept home in the FP3 condo development in Fort Point, a trendy warehouse district in Boston.

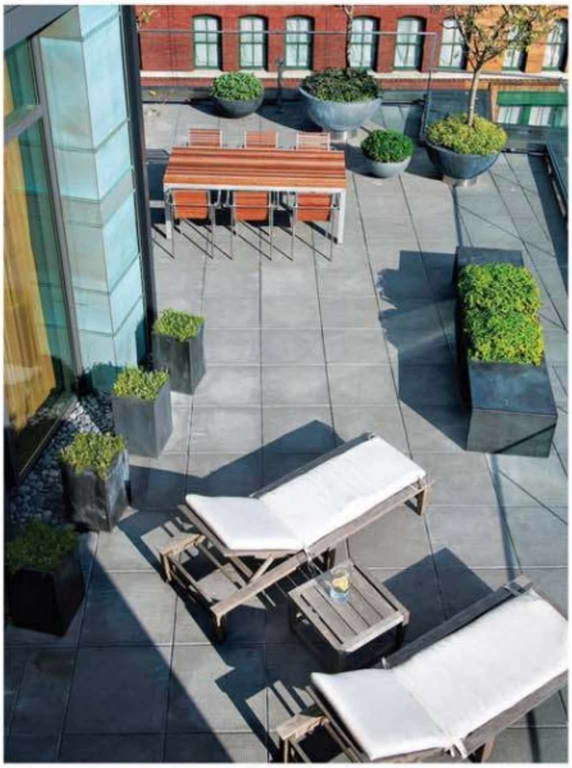
For Kennan — creative director of the two-year-old garden-design arm of Winston, widely acclaimed for its floral design work — it was a chance to showcase something she is passionate about: productive landscapes. Under Kennan's direction, every project the design team works on gives back to the environment in some way. As she points out, "A garden is more than aesthetic." FP3 also afforded an opportunity for Kennan to sharpen her rooftop-garden savvy and to test a range of edibles in that unique situation.

For the project, Kennan wanted a singular idea as a guide and,

LUIS BRENS







Above: Arranged among seating and dining areas of Extremis furniture are zinc containers from Domani planted with herbs like sage, parsley, Thai basil, golden marjoram and thyme. Even fruit found a place on the roof, including apple trees and strawberries (above left). **Left:** A custom-made "cage" of supports and cables held up a variety of tomatoes — 'Sweet 100', 'Fargo', 'Green Zebra' and 'Cherokee Purple'. An underplanting of 'Blackie' sweet-potato vine is decorative but also shades the tomatoes' roots (and the tubers are edible).

inspired by the presence of a new restaurant on the first floor of the building, she landed on the "urban potager," complete with an "in-ground" veggie garden, and pots of herbs and apple trees.

To create the in-ground section, Kennan worked with a structural engineer to be sure the weight would be distributed properly. A low, bottomless cedar box was then constructed over a graveled area (complete with existing roof drain). Within this were layered a waterproofing membrane, gravel, filter fabric and a soil especially designed for rooftop gardens called Rooflite. For plants, Kennan played with different textures and colors — 'Canary Yellow' Swiss chard, leeks, 'Purple Ruffles' basil, 'Sunburst' summer squash and celery — in a miniaturized abstraction of crop rows.

A wind-blocking wall behind this included a taller planter for tomatoes ('Sweet 100', 'Green Zebra', 'Cherokee Purple' and 'Fargo') and 'Blackie' sweet-potato vine (usually grown as an ornamental, Kennan says the tubers have a mild, sweet flavor). In modern zinc containers placed throughout the rooftop, she continued the point-counterpoint of color and texture with golden marjoram, sage, curly parsley, strawberries, basil and amaranth (whose leaves can be eaten like spinach; Kennan used cultivars that are also very decorative, like 'Oeschberg' and 'Molten Fire').

More than edible and functional, the landscape is also chic, and connected with the interior by repeating the color palette and offering alfresco spots to lounge and entertain. The penthouse designed by Hacin + Associates, a modern metal-clad addition atop the rehabbed brick warehouse, serendipitously has an angular design that created interstitial spaces ideal for the garden to interface with the home.

Though the garden was dismantled after four months, Kennan says the lessons she learned from the experience will be invaluable in future city projects. For starters, an integrated approach that loops in a landscape architect or designer at the outset of a rooftop project can intercept practical and structural problems (like weight placement) early on.

Also paramount are the environmental factors on a roof — particularly the wind — which are different from those on the ground. Containers need to be heavy enough to stay upright; small-leaved plants are less likely to dry out than large-leaved ones; wind blocks can be plant lifesavers. It's also hotter on a roof, so slow-bolting varieties of vegetables are the ones to look for. And exposure can be tricky — really bright or really shady, depending on rooftop structures and adjacent buildings. Though edibles typically need full sun, since the FP3 garden faced south, Kennan positioned some in part shade to counter the intensity of light and heat, and she put plants close together so they shaded each other's roots and needed less watering.

When the garden was being installed, Kennan worried that there wouldn't even be any vegetables or fruits, since many require pollination by bees, and not only was the garden several stories up, there were no nearby green spaces. But two days after the garden went in, there were bees all over the flowers. Kennan says, "It was a green oasis." winstonflowers.com — Jenny Andrews

LUIS BRENS (3); OPPOSITE, TOP TO BOTTOM: COURTESY BURPEE; ROB CARDILLO; COURTESY FLORANOVA; COURTESY ALL-AMERICAN SELECTIONS

Way Hot Plants

URBAN EDIBLES

Even gardeners in the city want to enjoy the taste of homegrown fruits and veggies. And they can, by making some careful choices. Look for plants with compact forms, and avoid anything that creates extensive vining stems or oversize fruits. Many vegetables are now offered in "patio" or dwarf versions that are designed for large containers, whether you're on a rooftop or want to add edibles to your patio or deck. For a skyline garden, also look for smaller-leaved plants and ones that are slow to bolt to pre-empt the windy, hot conditions found on most rooftops. — Jenny Andrews

For more Way Hot rooftop edibles, go to GARDENDESIGN.COM/ROOFTOP

SEE SOURCEBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION, PAGE 76



▲ Pepper

Pepper plants are the ideal size for gardens with limited space, and they love heat. One of Burpee-owner George Ball Jr.'s top picks is the new hot pepper 'Piñata Mix' with its party-colored, 3-inch fruits. Says George, "They're also stunning, so the plants can be integrated into an ornamental garden."



▲ Strawberry

Another option for rooftop and patio gardens is planting edibles in hanging baskets and pots, and strawberries are ideally suited for this. Try the heirloom alpine strawberry 'Mignonette', which has smaller and fewer fruits, but with twice the flavor as standard varieties.

▼ Basil

There are so many varieties, and some don't even look like basil, such as the tiny-leaved 'Aristotle' that could sub for boxwood. Basil also offers foliage color options, from 'Purple Ruffles' to vibrant green 'Summerlong', which Kennan found is resistant to bolting.



▼ Eggplant

Two All-America Selections winners, white 'Gretel' and purple 'Hansel', combine high yield with a compact size. The fruits are tender and tasty from the time they're 3-inch youngsters until they've reached their mature 10 inches.





Garden Décor

PRAIRIE-MODERN REVIVAL

When a design is radically ahead of its time — say, 100 years or so — it's bound to have staying power. So it is with the bold, architectonic shapes of Teco art pottery, originally produced between 1899 and the late 1920s by the American Terra Cotta & Ceramics Company in Illinois and often designed by prominent Prairie School architects associated with Frank Lloyd Wright.

Hard to come by (and expensive!) in recent years, Teco is back in a big way, with the recent re-issue of some dozen designs in six colors (some historic). At prices ranging from $60 to $195, the inexpensive doppelgängers are manufactured in Illinois by the same manufacturing process as the originals and from models using the exact measurements of antique pieces.

The company speaks of "reviving" not reproducing, and is proud of the product's fidelity to the original, though some elements can't be replicated. Says Bryan Kelly of Prairie Arts: "The glaze is as close as we can get, but the antique vases have a smoky 'charcoaling' effect because of the lead that was used. There's a difference, but it's pretty darn close." prairie-arts.com — Cara Greenburg

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Garden Décor

SETTING THE STANDARD

Design-savvy garden shoppers in Los Angeles have two new retail spots to satisfy their cravings.

Rolling Greens recently opened a Hollywood location in a 1930s historic brick tire garage. In it, owner-curator Greg Salmeri and merchandiser-stylist Angela Hicks created roomlike departments stocked with an around-the-world mix of garden and home finds including planters, pottery and vintage accessories. "California is such an indoor-outdoor experience, and we're trying to offer people a better way to live in both," Salmeri explains.

The 5,500-square-foot interior of the store also features the Algabar Tea Bar and the popular Arrangement Bar, where live plants and fresh flowers are custom assembled. That's where actor Tobey Maguire was recently spotted choosing several flower arrangements. Rolling Greens, 7505 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, 323-934-4500, rollinggreensnursery.com

The venerable **Inner Gardens** has a new address in Santa Monica's chic shopping district. The 2,000-square-foot space offers vintage and antique garden furniture, accessories, uncommon plants and unexpected industrial pieces.

Each item in owner Stephen Block's well-styled collection is chosen for the story it tells. "I look for age, simplicity and patina," he says. Whether it's Denzel Washington, who took home a pair of yellow-glazed, mid-19th-century French Anduze urns for his entryway, or dog-walking neighbors who come in to find an affordable piece of 1930s pottery, Inner Gardens "melds great, vintage pieces with interesting plants," Block says. Inner Gardens, 1324 Montana Ave., Santa Monica, 310-576-3400, innergardens.com — Debra Prinzing

See pictures of these stores and their hottest products at GARDENDESIGN.COM/STORES





Top: Rolling Greens' new Hollywood location is the scene for *Garden Design*'s Hollywood-issue launch party on March 4th with guest Mary Steenburgen (please join us!). **Above:** Inner Gardens also has two Los Angeles showrooms: one on Melrose and the other on Jefferson.

RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: ROBERT ROSENHECK; STEVE GUNTHER


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Just in
DESIGNING BY THE FOOT

If Sean Knibb has his way, cities across America will be dotted with urban meadows instead of water-chugging lawns and barren parking lots. To turn that fantasy into reality, the Jamaican-born California designer recently launched Knibb Modular, an interactive online design service aimed at matching up garden lovers with the stylish, affordable, eco-sensitive green space of their dreams. Think of it as eHarmony for the horticulture set.

"Knibb Modular is a way of simplifying the design process for clients," says Knibb, whose landscape design firm, Knibb Design, and furniture-and-garden showroom are located in Venice, California. "The gardens use very little water, and they're easy to maintain. I'm just using the Web as a tool so people can choose the sustainable materials and native plants they like, and customize everything before they get to us. It cuts time and money."

Like online dating sites, Knibb Modular begins with a questionnaire. Clients enter the size of their yard and how much sun or shade it gets, then select from a list of hardscape choices: permeable gravel or decomposed granite and cement pavers or recycled paving. For plants and trees, they pick from a menu of flowering and evergreen shrubs, bulbs, grasses, hedges and citrus. Clients also provide photos of the space before a design is created, in as little as six weeks.

Gardens start at $12 per square foot, which covers the layout, hardscaping and plants, drip irrigation and installation instructions for do-it-yourselfers. Site prep, delivery and professional installation cost extra, as do special materials and furnishings. The tab for a 1,500-square-foot modular garden would be $18,000. By comparison, if a client hired Knibb to create the same garden in the conventional manner, his design fees would add $6,000 to $9,000 on top of that.



Above: Recycled pavers set in gravel form a path through a 1,200-square-foot garden in Venice, California, where tall ficus hedges provide welcome privacy from an alley and ornamental grasses create another buffer from the street. **Below:** Bamboo and plumed grasses serve as green walls along a wooden catwalk that bisects a 1,500-square-foot backyard in Los Angeles into a simple gravel garden on one side and a paved deck around the swimming pool beyond.

So far, Knibb Modular has completed eight very personalized meadows, with four more in the works. While one project sprouted in the Hamptons, the others have taken root in and around Los Angeles. Not surprisingly, all share an evergreen framework — such as boxwood, coast rosemary or pittosporum — and look relaxed rather than manicured. "The idea," Knibb says, "is to have it look like nature came in and created another layer on top of the formality." knibbmodular.com — Emily Young



COURTESY KNIBB MODULAR (2)


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One to Watch
CHRISTOPHER YATES







A San Francisco garden (above right) by Christopher Yates (above) illustrates his interest in creating minimal artistic spaces as "objects of art to live in." **Right:** Yates' front-yard garden at the 2009 Decorator Showcase in San Francisco was a meeting of agricultural design and art.

Christopher Yates has found a new muse for his modern landscapes: social change. "Before, I always looked to the works of painters like Mondrian and Kandinsky ... to think of my work as monumental paintings on the ground," Yates says. "But considering the times we live in, gardens as fine art might not be the best use of my time." An advocate of front-yard gardens (to encourage neighborly exchange), edible landscapes and designing with compost, Yates' ideas are part of a larger movement that is reshaping the role gardens play in our lives and, by turn, building the next generation of modern landscapes. christopheryatesdesign.com
— Damaris Colhoun

Q: Are you abandoning your aesthetic for a more socially responsible approach to landscape design?

A: Not at all. I think art has the capacity to affect people deeply, and gardens do as well. I like the idea of linking agricultural gardens with artistic ones, like the kitchen gardens at Versailles, which are works of art. For my installation at the 2009 Decorator Showcase house in San Francisco last year, I planted European hornbeam trees, and on the ground beneath them I created stripes using compost made from vineyard grapes, which is a beautiful, blackish-eggplant color. The trees ended up dropping these glittery leaves onto the dark compost bands. The total effect was pretty dramatic.

Q: What gardens have inspired you lately?

A: There is so much current work that I find inspiring, being done at the interface between landscape and architecture. To name a few: the Plaza De España by Herzog and de Meuron, Andrea Cochran's Stone Edge Farm, and Kathryn Gustafson's Square of Human Rights. I am particularly drawn to Steven Holl's work — the Cranbrook Institute of Science and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art — and the emphasis he places on the phenomenology of architecture.

Q: What kind of gardens do you imagine for the future?

A: I'd like to see orchards and patchworks of veggie gardens in people's yards. Gardens like these mean we don't have to transport as much food, and they bring us closer to what we are eating. I'd like to create gardens that say something about who we are and where we are going.

Garden Gourmet
EATING HER YARD

When Catherine Hardwicke needs a break, she's out of her desk chair and into her garden to snip, pull and pick. "Every day I eat something out of the garden," the *Twilight* and *Thirteen* film director explains, while showing off a surprising variety of fruits, vegetables and herbs in her modest front yard, just steps away from the lively boardwalk in Venice, California.

On the heels of *Twilight*'s box-office success, Hardwicke purchased the house adjacent to her classic beach bungalow on one of Venice's walk-streets and merged the tiny gardens by enlisting fellow Venetian and Texan, Big Red Sun's Selena Souders.

As someone who has always been avidly concerned with her health and the environment, Hardwicke says, "I wanted to have a demonstration vegetable garden that also looks good." Already she has enjoyed the bounty of three seasons. "I love salads and being able to go out daily and get fresh greens."

To inaugerate her garden and to encourage her friends and neighbors to be part of her edible project, the director threw a planting party. "Hopefully people will think: 'Oh, she did it and she doesn't have a big front yard. I can do it in mine,'" Hardwicke says.
— Anastasia Bowen



Watch the planting party video at
GARDENDESIGN.COM/HARDWICKE

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: NANCY WARNER; MARION BRENNER; CHRISTOPHER YATES; COURTESY CATHERINE HARDWICKE


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HOMEGROWN, WITH STYLE



There's a certain pride that comes with harvesting carrots that you've coaxed from seed to sprout in your own backyard. The challenge: adding edibles into a stylish form. For a recent project in Lexington, Kentucky, garden designers Jon Carloftis and Dale Fisher found the solution and presented their client with a plan that featured a Hartley Botanic greenhouse: the same greenhouses used at and endorsed by the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in Richmond Surrey, London.

Finally gaining traction this side of the pond, a greenhouse is as common to an English home as a garage is here. Hartley Botanic has been at it since 1938, and works with homeowners and landscape designers from concept to installation to get it just right. Clients can choose from dozens of existing designs, go custom or somewhere in between. That's exactly what Fisher was looking for: "The clients have two kids and want to instill in their children the importance of knowing where food comes from, however style is still of the utmost importance to them." Mission accomplished. hartley-greenhouses.com — Nicki Collett

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I Love This Plant
VIREYA RHODODENDRONS



When I return to my hideaway on Hawaii's Big Island and begin the familiar ascent up my curvaceous, garden-bordered driveway, I'm looking for the vivid splashes of delicious color that are Vireya rhododendrons. Ranging in hues that include rich buttery apricots, bright oranges, pure yellows, clear raspberries and just about every color in between, the Vireyas are the crown jewels of my Hawaii garden.

The good news is that they also flourish in my Fairfax, California, garden. Here, I utilize them in pots, moving them from a growing area (they like bright conditions but need protection from the midday sun, similar to cymbidium orchids) into more-prominent garden locations when in bloom (I move mine to the pool area so I can see them through the glass French doors). Plus, container cultivation makes it easy to protect these beauties from a winter frost by moving them under a dense tree canopy, against a sunny south wall or even indoors if the need arises.

See more Vireyas and growing tips at GARDENDESIGN.COM/VIREYAS

Because many Vireya species grow as epiphytes in their natural environment, they are excellent candidates for pot culture, and the more-pendulous varieties can be grown in hanging baskets. The more than 300 Vireya species originate in the cooler mountainous regions of Southeast Asia, but they have been extensively hybridized over the past 30 years, yielding a dazzling selection of named varieties. Vireya plants range in size from miniature (12 to 24 inches) to tall shrubs (up to 8 to 10 feet). Flower size varies from clusters of candy-corn-size bells to trusses of huge trumpets. Many are fragrant, and most bloom off and on throughout the year. — Davis Dalbok

SEE SOURCEBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION, PAGE 76

BOTTOM: DAVIS DALBOK

FLEETING BEAUTY

Spring wildflowers are the glory of woodland gardens

STORY BY JENNY ANDREWS



ROB CARDILLO

What could be more beguiling — or more intrinsically American — than masses of trout lily, trillium, Dutchman's breeches and Virginia bluebells carpeting the woodland floor in early spring? Buffeted by chill breezes and braving the risk of late frost, what look like the most fragile of blossoms are actually some of the toughest plants on the planet. Emerging before deciduous trees have leafed out to block the sun and claim every drop of rain that falls, these spring lovelies waste no time producing foliage, flowers and seeds. Some of them, categorized as spring ephemerals, complete their life cycles by the end of May. Once the frenzy is past, forest wildflowers hunker down into dormancy, withdrawing into corms, rhizomes and tubers until they do it all again the next year. Dozing just under the soil surface with plenty of nutrients and moisture in storage, they are unfazed by the heat and drought of summer. Despite the brevity of their display, their low maintenance, longevity and profuse-blooming ways should make them ideal garden plants. But while most will readily spread if left to their own devices, difficulties in intentionally propagating many of them (trilliums can take up to seven years to go from seedling to blooming size) have led to collection from the wild, which can decimate indigenous populations. However, in recent years a handful of determined growers have focused on nursery propagation techniques, and now many spring natives are more readily available from trustworthy sources.

SEE SOURCEBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION, PAGE 76

SHOOTING STAR

A relative of cyclamen with the same swept-back petals, *Dodecatheon meadia* occurs across the eastern half of the U.S. — from New York to Texas — in glades, wooded slopes and prairies. The 1-foot flower stalks emerge from ground-hugging rosettes of oblong leaves. Typically the blooms are white in the Southeast and pinkish in the western parts of its range. Zones 4 to 8.



▲ BLOODROOT

The white-petaled blossoms of *Sanguinaria canadensis* pop above the leaf litter and unfurl early, a supportive leaf wrapped around each delicate stem like a shawl. Once the flowers are finished, the gray-green leaves overtop them to shield the developing seedpods. When cut, the gnarly rhizomes exude a red juice, used by Native Americans for face paint and medicinal purposes. Zones 3 to 8.



▲ TRILLIUM

Also called by the quaint names whippoorwill flower, toadshade and wake-robin, *Trillium cuneatum* is a long-lived member of the lily family, with its parts in threes (petals, sepals, leaves). The deep-maroon flowers rest atop foliage mottled dark green and gray-green, and are sweetly scented. Other trillium species have faintly foul aromas, all targeted to insects like gnats, which are the pollinators. Zones 5 to 9.

➤ DUTCHMAN'S BREECHES

Perched like laundry on a line, the quirky flowers of *Dicentra cucullaria* dangle from arching stems above mounds of blue-green ferny foliage. Just below ground, this ephemeral's small fistlike clusters of pinkish bulblets will break apart and reproduce to form large colonies in woodlands from Nova Scotia to Kansas. Zones 3 to 8.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ROB CARDILLO (2); ALAN & LINDA DETRICK; RIGHT PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ANDREA JONES; ROB CARDILLO (2)



▲ WILD COLUMBINE
Longer blooming than many spring wildflowers, *Aquilegia canadensis* can flower into July, after which it dies back to a thick underground stem. Naturally occurring in a range of habitats — from gravelly slopes to rich deciduous forests across the eastern half of North America — columbine's long-spurred, pendulous red and yellow flowers make it a good hummingbird plant. Zones 3 to 9.





▲ CELANDINE POPPY
A prolifically blooming wildflower native to much of the Southeast and Midwest, *Stylophorum diphyllum* is a poppy relative, with 3-inch, crepe-paper-textured flowers and distinctively lobed blue-green foliage. Hairy-looking pods can drop a multitude of seeds, which are carried off and "planted" by ants, which relish a fatty appendage on the seeds called an elaiosome. Zones 4 to 8.

◄ TROUT LILY
Also called fawn lily and dog-tooth violet, *Erythronium americanum* forms low-growing colonies of brown-speckled foliage topped by yellow flowers with recurved petals. Emerging from underground corms, plants with twin leaves will flower; those with single leaves are sterile, though they should flower in subsequent years. A similar species, *E. albidum* has white flowers. Zones 3 to 9.

➤ VIRGINIA BLUEBALLS
With bright-pink buds morphing into sky-blue tubular flowers dangling from 1- to 2-foot stems, *Mertensia virginica* is one of the showiest spring ephemerals. Often found along moist stream banks and wooded floodplains, Virginia bluebells can also occur on loamy upland sites. Though the plants have a substantial look, the show is brief, emerging in March and vanishing in May. Zones 3 to 8.





◀ DWARF CRESTED IRIS
A diminutive member of the iris family, only 4 to 6 inches tall, *Iris cristata* forms mats of slender interlocking rhizomes on the soil surface, often in limestone-rich habitats. As with many irises, this one requires good drainage. Dainty lavender flowers with a yellow beard emerge in April and last into May. Zones 4 to 8.

TOP TO BOTTOM: MMGI/BENNET SMITH; ROB CARDILLO

NATURE, NURTURE

CARE: Plant spring-blooming wildflowers in early spring or late summer; established colonies can be divided in early summer as the foliage starts to die down. Mulch annually in late fall or winter with 2 to 4 inches of compost before plants emerge. Mark or map where the plantings are so they aren't disturbed during later installations of annuals and perennials. To propagate from seed, many spring natives require a series of conditions, including a moist-cold treatment called stratification. Sow seeds in pots when they're ripe, set the pots in a safe place outdoors (where they will receive rainfall and experience temperature fluctuations but won't be disturbed by animals) and remember that patience is a virtue. If all goes well, look for seedlings the following spring.
ZONES: The wildflowers shown here are typical of the eastern half of the United States and parts of Canada. Some native woodland species occur as far south as Zone 9 and some as far north as Zone 2.
EXPOSURE: Spring-blooming natives found in the understory of deciduous forests require early-spring sunlight filtering through leafless trees to grow, bloom and set seed before going dormant by summer, so a garden location that mimics that situation is best.
SOIL: Forest-floor soil is high in organic matter from many years of leaf decay, so any location for woodland wildflowers needs to be similarly rich. In an existing forest locale, the nutrients are probably already present. In a newer shade garden, 4 to 6 inches of compost should be added to the top 4 to 6 inches of soil prior to planting. Soil high in organic material also tends to be moist yet well drained — perfect for these early-flowering natives.



INTERNATIONAL STYLE

Our favorites from Maison & Objet, available here at home **STORY BY ANNE ROBERT**





1. USE THAT WALL
Fabulous news: Outdoor walls are finally inspiring top designers. Outdoor specialist Flora and French designer Arik Levy presented Comb-ination, a clever wall-mounted grid made of powder-coated galvanized metal inspired by honeycombs. Organize grids to suit your space, and then use them as plant trellises or decorative elements. Available in small, medium and large. From $52 to $116, jungledesignnyc.com

2. SHADE SCULPTURES
The previous decade saw the rise of shade structures such as sails — distinguished from parasols in that they don't open and close. With M1-Stingray, shade specialist Tuuci stretches the boundaries further. As well as providing shade, it doubles up as a stunning sculptural feature. State-of-the-art, marine-grade materials guarantee durability of this buy. 7'x10' is $4,935.00 and 9'x13' is $7,395, tuuci.com

3. SLIM DESIGNS
High-performance materials are freeing outdoor designs from their bulkiness. A brilliant example of the new generation of slim designs is Cloud presented by Gloster. The chic range of modular components includes angle pieces, sofas, seats and a stunning collection of cushions in a variety of colorful and graphic patterns. Gloster has invested in the very latest weaving and stitching technologies to achieve the best-ever weather protection. From $1,450 to $5,092, gloster.com



Read Anne Robert's guest blog at GARDENDESIGN.COM/BLOG



4. CUDDLE UP IN PRIVATE

The more we travel, the more our human need for protection and privacy grows. This desire is superbly served by Ego Paris Eden; the new daybed/gazebo is designed with a motif reminiscent of a nest and uses the technique normally used on catamarans to stretch the base to provide a floating sensation. Eden is available in a large selection of colors and materials. $10,030, egoparis.com

5. BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Innovation at the start of the outdoor-design revolution was characterized by the wish to break free from any garden references. As the market matures, designers are increasingly revisiting garden classics. Italian brand B&B Italia presented an updated variation of the ultraclassic garden bench. Perhaps inspired by the waves of the namesake lake, the Titikaka bench by Naoto Fukasawa conceals astute engineering allowing the teak and aluminum frame to flow effortlessly. Price upon request, bebitalia.it

6. SECRETLY PRACTICAL

Alea is a large cube-shaped planter. Very simple in appearance, this latest design by Dirk Wynants aims to solve that real-life problem: Large flowerpots make a great decorative statement, but they are impossibly hard to move! The trick is that Alea's glass-fiber planter cover conceals a set of wheels beneath. Available for indoor and outdoor use in two sizes and five colors (black, ivory, beige/gray, red and white). 52x52x48 cm is $1,800 and 90x90x85 cm is $3,600, extremis.eu



STYLE NOTES:

Maison & Objet's special section Outdoor-Indoor has earned its reputation as the best place to track trends and discover the best in outdoor-living products. Every September an entire building is taken over by the top design brands promoting their latest outdoor furniture, lighting, pots and decorative accessory innovations. This year in particular, the fair showcased amazingly modern, sleek, full **outdoor kitchens** that are closer to indoor setups and not bulky at all. The variety of items was a clear winner with leading garden designers.

Charlotte Rowe, one of London's top garden designers, summed it up brilliantly: "There is now much more choice of **materials and fabrics** that can be used out of doors, which is hugely important, making it even more of a viable option to style a garden in the same way that one styles an interior. One particularly important development for people living in cities with minimal storage space for cushions is the range of furniture that is now available with cushions built into the design, which can be *in situ* outside all year."

Great Garden Getaway

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- Get inspired as author and gardener Amy Stewart shares images and histories from her own travel-inspired garden.
- Learn to incorporate edibles into your garden during a personal consultation with *Garden Design*'s own features editor Jenny Andrews.
- Hear ideas on gardening for the 21st century from Texas premier landscape architect Nan Booth Simpson during a special Earth Day presentation.

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JACKSONVILLE'S LONG LOST GARDENS

Rediscovering Ellen Biddle Shipman's masterpiece

STORY BY JUDITH TANKARD ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICK HALES



Opposite: The Italian Garden designed by Ellen Biddle Shipman in 1931, now restored to its former glory, reflects her trademarks: layered plantings, lush borders and seating areas. It was inspired by the Cummers' visit to Italy the previous year. The marble fountain, recast in 2001, is ringed by hedges and a gloriette (pergola) clothed in climbing fig. **Right:** The ancient Cummer Oak spreads over brick piers and columnar arborvitaes.



timeline: cummer gardens

1890s The Cummer family, Michigan lumber barons, begins settling in Jacksonville, Florida

1903 Michigan landscape architect Ossian Cole Simonds, proponent of the "middle-western movement," designs landscape plan for family compound under direction of Ninah Cummer

1910 Philadelphia nurserymen and designers Thomas Meehan and Sons plan landscape that includes English Garden

1930 Arthur and Ninah Cummer go on trip to Italy, return loaded with garden ornaments

1931 Ellen Biddle Shipman designs her masterwork — the Italian Garden — on site of former garage

1950s Italian Garden becomes very overgrown

1961 Opening of Cummer Gallery (later renamed Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens)

1999 Restoration of Italian Garden begins; hundreds of azaleas replanted

2008 *A Legacy in Bloom*, by Judith Tankard, celebrates a century of Cummer gardens

Early in the 20th century, a thousand miles from the Northeast hotbed of landscape design, a Florida lumber family began creating a showcase of gardens designed by some of the country's top talent, including the renowned New York landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman. Her name was all but lost to history until about 10 years ago when Shipman's role was rediscovered, and a campaign was mounted to revitalize the sleeping gardens. Today the impeccable restorations are filled with rare horticultural specimens as well as reflecting pools, fountains, arbors and an extraordinary collection of garden ornament and sculpture that complements the museum's interior collections.

Along the banks of the St. Johns River, the landscapes at the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens in Jacksonville nestle under the wide canopy of the famed Cummer Oak, reputed to be one of the oldest live oak trees in Florida. The museum preserves and celebrates the legacy of the Cummer family, who came from a long line of Michigan lumber barons and settled in Jacksonville around 1900. One of the first things they did there was to confer with the Midwestern landscape architect, Ossian Cole Simonds, about their extensive family compound. Simonds enhanced the stands of majestic live oaks along the riverfront with naturalistic sweeps of spirea, barberry, lilacs and forsythia in an informal landscaping style that provided a backbone for later ornamental gardens. About seven years later, the Philadelphia nurserymen Thomas Meehan and Sons augmented the grounds with crape myrtle, pomegranate, date palm and other trees and shrubs that were more suited to the Southern climate. They also created an English

Garden, a formal flower garden with brick paths and a central sundial, filled with dozens of traditional perennials such as daylilies, peonies, irises and cascades of climbing roses. The outstanding feature of this new garden was the spectacular wisteria-laden cypress arbor overlooking the river.

Ninah Cummer, whose husband was head of the Cummer Lumber Company, was passionately interested in gardening — although she didn't lift a finger herself. She kept improving and fine-tuning the gardens, adding low pittosporum hedges to create more areas for lilies, agapanthus and amaryllis, and carving out other areas as needed. She began collecting antique garden ornaments, such as bird baths, wall plaques, urns and statuary, as well as new pieces crafted by Pennsylvania artist William Mercer that all needed a place in the gardens. Ninah shared her passion for gardening with her sister-in-law, Clara Cummer, who also lived in the compound. They later became friendly rivals as they developed their respective areas. Clara later commissioned William Lyman Phillips of the Olmsted firm to design extensive gardens.

The jewel in the crown of the Cummer Museum today is the magnificent Italian Garden, designed by Shipman in 1931. It was conceived as the ultimate display garden for Ninah's large collection of Italian marble garden ornaments and hundreds of azaleas (Ninah was one of the first to introduce azaleas into northeast Florida). This new garden provided the perfect companion to the earlier English Garden, both of which overlook the river. Two long reflecting pools, flanked by Shipman's signature flower borders, frame the view to the green, ficus-covered gloriette that resembles the famous water gardens at the Villa Gamberaia in Tuscany. Ninah and her husband had visited Italy the previous year, returning home with a boatload of ornaments, including a large stone fountain, benches and lions.

Shipman designed the new garden so it could be enjoyed aesthetically and sensually from several vantage points: from the upper terrace and from the riverfront. The carefully orchestrated color scheme ranged from pale-toned azaleas in the foreground to more brilliantly colored annuals in the distance. The two long pools reflected the blue sky, and roses gracefully drooped over the sides. She added plenty of ornamental shrubs and small trees for screening around the edges of the garden, shrubs in the flower borders for eye-level appeal, and low-growing masses of perennials and annuals expertly arranged for color and texture at one's feet. Climbers on the walls and regularly spaced standards of roses, camellias and wisteria increased the lushness of the scheme. Among the drifts of flowers, clipped evergreens or tubs of small trees served to strengthen the architectural framework.

The gardens reached their apogee in the late 1930s, when they were ablaze with hundreds of azaleas set amidst a stunning collection of garden ornaments, including a large fountain on the riverfront vista. By the 1950s, the once-splendid gardens were a mere shadow of their former glory. By then, Ninah was focusing her energies on building an art collection that became the foundation for the present museum. The gardens later faded into history, and their recent rehabilitation involved sweeping away overgrown trees and shrubs, and replanting hundreds of azaleas and other plants following Shipman's original suggestions. But despite some initial problems (some of which Ninah also encountered), the Italian Garden today is a remarkable testimony to the energy of both Ninah Cummer and Ellen Shipman. The restoration of the Italian Garden has generated even more interest in the work of Shipman, and the list of her other gardens now under restoration continues to grow.

The English Garden has also been revitalized, and future plans include restoring the Olmsted firm's gardens that were once part of Clara Cummer's property. The museum has engaged Belgian landscape architect François Goffinet to prepare a master plan for the expanding campus and to oversee the restoration of the historic Olmsted area. SEE SOURCEBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION, PAGE 76



DESIGNER PROFILE:
ELLEN BIDDLE SHIPMAN

A nationally prominent landscape architect, Ellen Biddle Shipman (born in 1869) began her career in 1912 after training with the country house architect Charles Platt. By the time she closed her New York office in 1946, she had designed well over 600 gardens, located mostly in the Northeast and Midwest. Few of her gardens survive today, exceptions being the Italian Garden at the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens in Jacksonville, Longue Vue House and Gardens in New Orleans, the English Garden at Stan Hywet Hall in Akron, Ohio, the Sarah P. Duke Gardens in Durham, North Carolina, and a handful of others. Shipman was renowned for her artistic planting style based on her horticultural expertise. Her exquisite layered plantings — composed of annuals, perennials and small shrubs arranged for color and textural effects — were highly sought after by her clients, yet proved difficult to maintain except by trained gardeners. Her clients were almost exclusively garden-club women who had the knowledge and means to support her style of design. Shipman was an active advocate for women in the profession, training many successful designers in her office. She was also an active lecturer, and her gardens were routinely featured in *House Beautiful*, *House and Garden*, and other popular magazines. After her death in 1950, her style of gardening went out of fashion. It has been only in recent years that her importance has been recognized, with the result that some of her remaining gardens have been restored.

For more information, see *The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman* (Abrams/Sagapress, 1996) and *A Legacy in Bloom: Celebrating a Century of Gardens at the Cummer* (Cummer Museum, 2008), both by Judith B. Tankard.

TOP: JUDITH B. TANKARD


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WORTH THE WAIT

A multifaceted garden mirrors the wealth of Idaho ecosystems

STORY BY JENNY ANDREWS



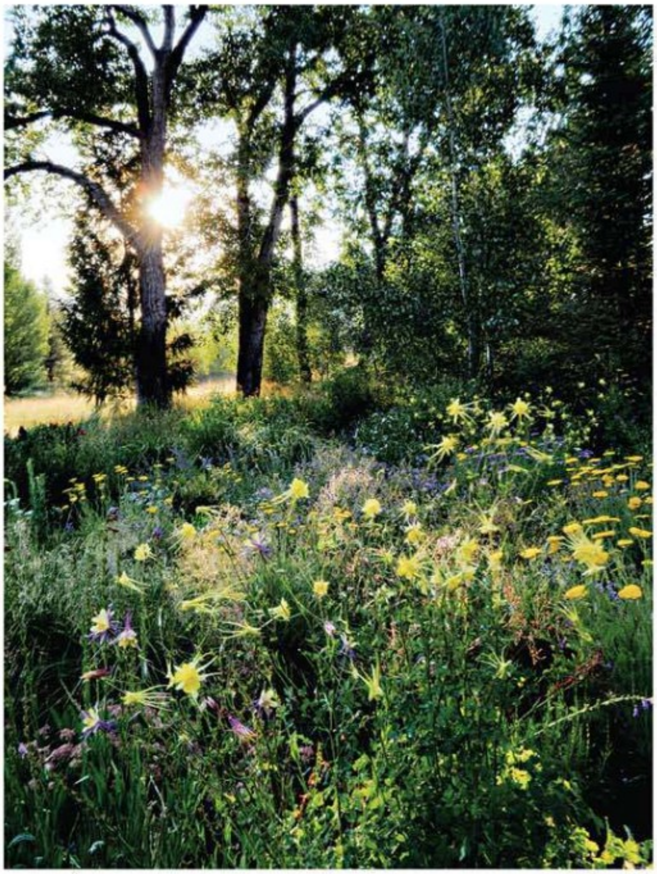
Above: In a layered landscape in Sun Valley, Idaho, a Zen garden near the house — which features basalt scholar stones naturally sculpted by the Bigwood River — segues to a "lawn" of Idaho fescue and sculpted berms that mirror the foothills of the Pioneer Range in the distance. The berms also screen a nearby neighborhood and create ideal eco niches for a wide range of native plant species. Designed by Idaho-based Native Landscapes, the project kept wise water use in mind, as well as wildlife habitat and use of local materials.

KIRSTEN SCHULTZ

Charles Conn is a patient man. Others might have rushed to the garden center for a cartload of quick-fix annuals to tide them over until their new garden matured. But Conn has watched his native-based landscape gradually come into its own over the past four years, reveling as tiny columbine seedlings volunteered and a family of foxes set up housekeeping in the rock wall.

Though for most of his working life a businessman/entrepreneur on the West Coast, Conn's years living under the big sky in Idaho have fostered a deep appreciation for natural processes and what grows wild in every nook and cranny. As he says, "You can't live here without loving the environment." Now the senior adviser for conservation programs at the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, when it came to his own plot of earth, Conn wanted to be as conscientious about stewardship at home as on the job.

He hit upon the ideal team in Native Landscapes, a design firm based in Hailey, Idaho. Founded by landscape ecologist Kelley Weston, the firm's forte is a seeming oxymoron — "designed natural landscapes." This approach of interfacing native ecosystems with design, and overlaying this onto a client's needs and ideas, has resulted in gardens that are regionally appropriate but also beautiful. As Karen Sherrerd, the firm's landscape architect, puts it: "Clients are finding that they can have a good-looking landscape with less maintenance and water. And



it can work on any scale, even small in-town properties."

Native Landscapes' philosophy is also the antithesis of the "turf-and-tree" model that has long held sway in Sun Valley. And the firm's history of being green puts them at the forefront of a paradigm shift in attitudes there about landscape design. As business manager James Gillespie puts it: "Our growth has been extraordinary over the past five years. The time is now for people to think more about the context they live in. And there's a greater understanding of what a sustainable landscape means."

Visit our Living Green portal online at GARDENDESIGN.COM/LIVINGGREEN

Not only has the "golf-course aesthetic," as Conn refers to it, become a costly construct in Idaho (maintenance, fertilizer, pest control), but water restrictions — with communities starting to pay for water, and acreage and gallons-per-day limits being set for irrigation — are making it incongruous. With a typical 15 inches of precipitation a year (much of it in the form of snow), the region is putting a premium on water.

Weston's plan of attack when designing any garden is, "First, start with a landscape that doesn't need much water." The Conn project includes drought-tolerant plants, a well-designed irrigation system, a series of landform "channels" to move water through the landscape, and a sophisticated underground method of monitoring soil moisture. As Sherrerd says, "The garden can essentially have the water turned off and still look lush." Symbolic of this respect for the value of water is the ultimate drought-tolerant landscape, a Zen garden, situated at the back of Conn's rustic, Asian-vibe home.

Left: An existing grove of cottonwoods was protected during the landscape-construction process. In the foreground, a mix of natives includes yellow columbine, *Aquilegia chrysantha*. **Below left:** A berm is blanketed with yarrow, Rocky Mountain penstemon and bluebunch wheatgrass. **Below right:** An homage to the preciousness of water in the Zen garden.





TOP TO BOTTOM: DEV KHALSA (2); KIRSTEN SCHULTZ; OPPOSITE: DEV KHALSA



Left: The closer the garden is to the house, the higher the concentration of flowering plants, including both native and nonnative drought-tolerant species. Farther out, the plant mix is all native with a wilder look. The entire two-acre landscape has been oriented to the house so that, according to homeowner Charles Conn, "everywhere you look are gardens."

In addition to being water wise, Native Landscapes also makes a point of addressing the full spectrum of sustainability issues as part of its mission, including the use of local materials, no fertilizers or herbicides, preservation of natural areas and creation of wildlife habitat. For this project, all the materials were sourced from within 100 miles, such as basalt pavers and compost from a community green-waste program. Though the site was more than 90 percent disturbed by previous landscaping efforts, groves of cottonwood and aspen were protected during the implementation of the new project. And a common sight from the house windows includes plenty of birds, with moose, deer and bear wandering through. (Conn says any nibbling is a reasonable price to pay — "the plants usually need pruning anyway.")

One thing Native Landscapes is widely known for is its penchant for native plants, and on the two-acre Conn property, which in a nod to a cluster of cabins formerly located there, Conn calls "the Hideaway," four distinct ecosystems native to the region are intentionally represented — an aspen community of groundcovers and subshrubs, a conifer forest, a riparian strip that winds its way through the garden and the sagebrush steppe.

But the inclusion of regional ecosystems is only part of the picture. An earlier iteration of the landscape had left a 15-foot-high, U-shaped berm around the house, useful for blocking a view of neighbors, though a significant challenge for Weston and Sherrerd. But the design team and Conn saw an opportunity to amp up the diversity of flora and fauna by resculpting the berm to create an interlocking patchwork of mini ecosystems, including talus fields and rock outcrops. The once-obtrusive earthwork now blends seamlessly with the natural surroundings, mimicking the hilly topography in the distance.

Plants for the project were carefully sourced as custom-grown plugs or seeds, from 5-foot-tall Great Basin wild rye to buckwheat to penstemons. Native Landscapes even has federal permission to collect seeds from the wild, allowing the firm to tailor plants to suit specific conditions such as elevation, moisture and exposure. Weston himself hand-seeded several of the 15 or so sages in the garden. As Conn says: "Every time we tried to go outside Kelley's core planning, we got into trouble. The stuff that works is the stuff that belongs here."

Illustrative of Native Landscapes' meticulous process, to create an accurate aspen grove as a backdrop for a picnic area, the team measured and graphed the sizes and distributions of the native species in a representative plant community in the wild. As Sherrerd puts it, "We mapped the aspen matrix." Replicated on the Conn property, it had the look of a thriving young aspen grove even from its installation.

All Weston and his group ask from clients is a suspension of any gotta-have-it-now habits. Says Sherrerd, "Just have faith in us for three to five years, and you'll have a full-on native garden." Hence the need for patience. But Weston and Sherrerd insist that an "incremental transformation" (beginning with the soil) is the most ecologically sound approach and the one most conducive to long-term success. Sherrerd adds, "If you step back, the macro view is that each landscape is a piece of the overall ecology, which is what draws people to the region in the first place."

SEE SOURCEBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION, PAGE 76

GO WILD WITH NATIVE PLANTS

CLOSE TO HOME
Of the thousands of native plants out there, the ones most appropriate for your garden are those closest at hand. While many plants termed "native" can be found wild in a general sense (in North America, the U.S. or a given state), they might not actually occur in your particular area. Buy plants and seeds (always from reputable dealers) from as locally based a source as possible.

MACRO AND MICRO
Keep in mind both the broader ecosystems for your region as well as microhabitat opportunities. This will give your garden a wider diversity of species, both plant and animal. Even on a low berm, the north-facing and south-facing sides will offer different conditions for different plants.

COMMUNITY EFFORT
While it's tempting when planning a garden to just cherry-pick natives that you are partial to, individual species don't grow in isolation. They occur in plant communities, typically with the same "companions" found together across their ranges. The main reason for this is that the members of these communities all thrive in the same conditions of soil, moisture, light, pH and temperature. By combining plants that naturally grow together in the wild, a landscape not only "looks right," but the soil prep and maintenance needs will be consistent.



mise en scène

Mary Steenburgen and Ted Danson find a haven in their Ojai, California, garden designed by Pamela Burton

STORY BY DEBRA PRINZING ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK COYIER



Mary Steenburgen's love of lush Southern gardens is reinterpreted in her semiarid landscape in Ojai. Landscape architect Pamela Burton and gardeners Jessica Thompson and Kimberly Ainsworth infused the more than 10-acre property with succulents, Mediterranean-climate plants (such as Geraldton waxflower, shown opposite) and California natives, giving their style-savvy client a romantic scene that fits beautifully into the rugged California setting.



In spite of their star power, Academy Award-winner Mary Steenburgen (*Melvin and Howard*) and her two-time Emmy Award-winning husband, Ted Danson (*Cheers*), have made their home far from the red carpet — in Ojai, California. Only about 80 miles north of Hollywood by car, it might as well be another world, and that is how they like it.

"It feels infinite here," Mary confides. She counts herself fortunate to call this place home, doubly so since she first fell in love with the property years earlier when her friend Ellen DeGeneres owned it, and a subsequent owner had actually modeled renovations on Mary's former farmhouse, also in Ojai. "This house had been getting ready for me for years and years," Mary says.

On a fresh spring morning with a layer of dew making the landscape look iridescent, Mary and Ted breakfast outdoors at a weathered farm table beneath a mature oak tree, one of five on the property. A chorus of songbirds harmonizes with the trickle of a fountain. Holding mugs of coffee and followed closely by their canine trio — Roxy, Arthur and Lulu — the couple wanders the garden, brushing their ankles on aromatic sage, catmint and rosemary plants that spill onto the paths. They check the progress of ripening berries in the kitchen garden and stroll to the guest cottage where an elliptical lawn is ringed with roses, irises and drifts of *Carex*. They pause to drink in the views of the Ojai Valley to the west.

The name "Ojai" is thought to be derived from a Chumash Indian word meaning "nest," which seems a fitting description for this dreamy, life-affirming garden, designed to envelop its owners with sensory delights. It is also a place far removed from the dazzle of Tinseltown, where both actors are immortalized with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. "Some people might be bored with this," Mary says, gesturing toward the violet-brown hills. "But to me, there aren't enough hours in the day here. I came to Ojai to find something real and I did. It has never stopped knocking at my soul."

Surrounded by more than 10 acres of orange, grapefruit and avocado groves, Mary and Ted's white board-and-batten-style ranch house has a cherry-red front door and generously proportioned terraces built from local Ojai stone. A wraparound porch is furnished with eclectic groupings — a mix of cushioned armchairs, wicker side tables and vintage



Opposite: Beneath an oak that shades the dining patio, a weathered farm table found on a trip to Texas displays succulent-filled troughs. "It's a favorite place to have lunches and late-afternoon glasses of wine," Mary confides. **Right:** Raised beds of local Ojai stone grow organic vegetables, herbs and berries.



Left: Mary calls her garden "tumbly," an apt description for the abundant borders that spill onto pathways. Here, a vignette of *Salvia*, *Phormium*, *Centaurea*, *Miscanthus* and *Hemerocallis*. **Opposite:** Seen here strolling past the swimming pool, Mary frequently travels away from Ojai to work on film, television and stage projects, but her heart and creative spirit remain closely tied to her home and garden. "This valley is deeply nurturing," she says.

flea-market finds — from Rooms & Gardens, a Santa Monica design and antique store that Mary owns with partners Eric and Jami Voulgaris.

Clustered close to the residence, majestic native California oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) provide shelter from Ojai's summer and winter extremes. "We've never named the property, but I said to Ted that if we were to, I would call it 'Five Oaks,'" Mary says. Farther out, billowy borders are filled with silvery-blue. Mediterranean plants, ornamental grasses and drought-tolerant succulents satisfy Mary's notion of a lush, romantic landscape. "It's tumbly, which I love," she says. "That's probably the word I use the most to describe the garden."

Ted, who eats a mostly vegan diet, views the garden as a delicious, organic food source. "Ted calls our orchard 'Whole Foods,'" Mary jokes. "His favorite thing is to slow the car down and pick fruit out the window." They inherited from the property's prior owner — a chef — a small potager of raised stone vegetable beds arranged in a rectangle and have since added a 15-square-foot pea patch.

After they left Los Angeles and moved to their Ojai house in 2005, Mary and Ted "wanted to make this place our own," she says. For the landscape, they needed to blend the architecture with several disconnected garden features, including a swimming pool and a long border that divided the yard from the citrus grove. They also wanted their garden to relate more intentionally to the natural setting, thus deepening their roots there.

"I'm Southern, so I love green, verdant, mossy gardens," says the Arkansas native in her soft, lilting drawl. "I love all different shades of green — it's my favorite color. But at the same time, we also wanted to respect the fact

ROOMS & GARDENS

In 2006, Mary partnered with her friends Eric and Jami Voulgaris to open Rooms & Gardens in Santa Monica, a 1,800-square-foot emporium offering custom furniture, antiques, accessories and interior-design services. "I love their creativity and their taste," Mary says of the designer-couple who opened the original Rooms & Gardens in Santa Barbara in 1993 and still operate it. Mary was one of their early customers: "My first Ojai house was filled with things of theirs, and I love their style."

For the new store in Santa Barbara, the three wanted to blend Rooms & Gardens' British Colonial and California-casual aesthetic with Mary's gypsy-Bohemian vibe. On their domestic and European buying trips, Mary and Jami seek out one-of-a-kind accessories and antiques to accent the store's custom furniture lines. "The store is warm and comfortable and colorful and practical and elegant and hip — and at the same time, it's not insultingly faddy," Mary says of their retail venture. "I think Jami and Eric help 'class-ify' me, and I help 'funk-ify' them. Together, it's a beautiful, visual, design marriage."





The stone patio on the west side of the house accommodates Mary's vintage iron garden furniture that she had reupholstered in soft blue-green. Opposite: Referred to as the belvedere, Italian for "fair view," a 16-by-30-foot stone patio appointed with an antique stone table is situated at the base of a broad staircase with a view of Ojai Valley.



DESIGN SENSIBILITIES: MARY STEENBURGEN

Mary Steenburgen's passions encompass far more than her work on stage and screen. She paints, writes music, supports causes and is involved in design ventures, including Rooms & Gardens (see box) and her candle company Nell's Compass. Here she shares insights into her personal design philosophy.

Q. How do you describe your design style?
A. My style is a little Bohemian. I definitely appreciate exotic things — Chinese pieces, French pieces. I love the Chinoiserie-French marriage. I also love humor in design. I never understood how anyone can live in a house that doesn't tell you who they are.
Q. Would you say your style is eclectic?
A. It doesn't feel eclectic. It feels like it all works together very gracefully. It feels like a captain lived by the sea, and he traveled to faraway lands and brought back these pieces.
Q. There are very few, if any, primary colors in the garden. What is your favorite color palette?
A. I love color, and my decorating inside is mostly with jewel tones. But I felt the mountains dictated the garden's lavenders and purples, so we enjoy the soft plant palette up close and far away.
Q. What is your favorite part of the garden?
A. We have too many choices about where we want to look and walk. Ted and I like to get up in the morning and change where we sit outdoors to have breakfast.



that this is California, and it feels inappropriate to plant an English garden here." Through a friend, she and Ted met landscape architect Pamela Burton, who is based in Santa Monica but also owns a home in Ojai, and asked her to create a master plan. Like her clients, Burton was influenced by an almost spiritual connection to Ojai. "Mary and Ted have a sense of awe and amazement about this place," Burton says. "Their joy of living here is absolutely wonderful."

Much of the landscape architect's work involved opening up views and enhancing the indoor-outdoor connections. For example, Burton suggested lowering a dense hedge of *Escallonia* and lightly pruning a row of California pepper trees to open up views of the mountains to the south. She removed massed plantings of Pride of Madeira to open up views of the ridge to the west. "The solution created a series of textured layers that reveal the mountains," Burton says. "The openings in the trees frame the view and extend the size of the property. Now Mary and Ted can stand at the terrace and see the rest of Ojai."

Burton infused the landscape with a mix of California natives like manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* 'Sunset'), *Carpenteria californica* and *Heuchera maxima* with plants from other Mediterranean climates, including giant cape rush (*Chondropetalum elephantinum*) and ground morning glory (*Convolvulus mauritanicus*) from South Africa, and coast rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa* 'Blue Heaven') from Australia. The initial planting scheme has since been expanded by Jessica Thompson and Kimberly Ainsworth of Ojai Valley-based Green Goddess Gardens, who installed Burton's design and manage the gardens.

Learn more about this garden at GARDENDESIGN.COM/STEENBURGEN

Tuning in to the property's variety of microclimates led Thompson and Ainsworth to add more drought-tolerant plants, including Geraldton waxflower



(*Chamelaucium uncinatum*) and several varieties of salvia, such as 'Indigo Spires' and 'Allen Chickering'. "Mary loves color, and we tried to get away from a monochromatic scheme by adding plants with different shades of green, silver and burgundy foliage," Ainsworth explains.

Burton repeated the honey-gold Ojai stone — used elsewhere in garden walls and patios — in the lawn, where she added two broad steps that visually connect the house's south-facing covered porch with the stone-clad swimming pool. More stone was added as 14-inch-high bench walls between the porch's columns of climbing roses and in an enlarged courtyard outside the front door, creating a cool, quiet place with vintage garden furniture and a stone fountain.

The stone's most dramatic role occurs beyond the west side of the house, inspired by something Mary uttered when walking through the property with Burton. "She has such a sweet, Southern way of saying things," Burton recalls. "And she's very intuitive about design. Mary stood in her living room and said, 'I want to open these doors and walk into the landscape.' Once she has the germination of an idea, she has a wonderful sense of how to make it happen."

The idea transformed a small, walled terrace into a gracious, beckoning belvedere, accessed by a broad staircase that connects to a 16-by-30-foot stone landing level with the garden's walkway. "I wanted there to be an invitation to the garden, to the mountains," Mary explains. Indeed, the stone belvedere is now a place where Ted and Mary entertain. Mary's vintage garden furniture and an antique stone table give the space the feeling of an open-air foyer.

It's possible to begin at the belvedere and loop through the entire cultivated landscape, down the long border, past a fire pit, behind the pool house and through the cutting garden, where 80-plus varieties of roses soak up the sun. The journey finishes in the vegetable garden, which is connected by a few steps to the stone patio outside Ted and Mary's kitchen.

Many hands have helped to create this landscape, a place where Mary considers herself "ridiculously blessed" to spend her days, adding, "I don't know if anyone has loved this place more than we do."

SEE SOURCEBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION, PAGE 76

Above: The lower garden offers a gently meandering journey that connects the house (in the distance) with a fire pit, which is located to the right of this scene. "There's a wonderful, purple-blue element to the mountains, and that's why it was really important to have lavenders and purples in the garden — so we have the same palette up close and far away," Mary says.

Indoors, outdoors and in between, you can best express your personal style with well-placed ornamentation, cherished objects and collections. Actress Mary Steenburgen adorns her Ojai, California, landscape with vintage and antique finds discovered while making European buying trips for her design shop Rooms & Gardens. She uses the objects — whether precious or humble — to put her own stamp on favorite garden spots, including the covered porches of her ranch house and an outdoor dining space under a massive oak tree. "To me, you just have to make it your own," she says.



FOUNTAINS

Mary selected an antique weathered-stone fountain, originally from Provence, as the focal point of the home's entry courtyard, lending it old-world ambience. Water spills from four burnished spigots into the lower basin. Several other fountains in the garden have been placed close to outdoor seating areas so their splashing sounds can be enjoyed, even through open windows.



LIGHTING

Illuminating the garden after dark, lighting conveys a romantic mood and expands the use of outdoor entertainment areas. Illumination in Mary's garden includes this vintage metal lantern, hurricane lamps, pedestal candles, strings of carnival lights in the outdoor dining area and wicker-ball lanterns in oak trees.



FOLLIES

Nestled in the center of a flowering perennial bed, a vintage cupola delights the eye. The architectural artifact gives this planting scheme a focal point, while the garden easily handles the ornament's oversize proportion.



TABLETOPS

For an interior-style vignette, here a simple flagstone slab rests on top of a quartet of stone pedestals to create a gracious display table on Mary's belvedere. She topped the table with a trough of succulents and a pair of footed glass hurricanes. This grouping would be equally eye-catching indoors or out.



CONTAINERS

Mary's vintage troughs contain effusive displays of silver-blue, green and red-tinged succulents. The trio of vessels gives the rustic farm table a casual elegance.



SEATING

Heighten the enjoyment of garden views and vistas by strategically placing comfortable seating. To breathe new life into classic, vintage and retro-style outdoor furniture, it can be repainted and given new cushions. While her furniture dates from different decades, it works together because Mary has chosen a coordinated palette of blue-green and white.



GATES

Mary came upon a beautiful but uncommon section of filigreed iron and asked her builder, Floyd Striegel, to install it as the garden's entry gate. Ornamental as well as functional, she uses this and other gates to invite entry and exploration from one section of the garden to the next.



Behind Kyle MacLachlan's house, the steps curve down to a path that winds between the pool and outdoor shower. Before landscape designer Jon Goldstein began work, the lava rock now surrounding the pool was just heaped in a dusty pile. The bamboo in the background is now held at bay by the retaining wall Jon built. Opposite left: Bryan Cranston pushes his wife, Robin, on the tree swing in their side yard. Opposite right: Kyle (left) with Jon.

the makeover artist

Designer Jon Goldstein brings new vitality to the gardens of Kyle MacLachlan and Bryan Cranston

STORY BY LEIGH ANN LEDFORD ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY HENRY FECHTMAN





The irony of a modern Hollywood garden is that it isn't fussy and fabulous — it's a zone of comfort where stars can just *be*. Walk into Kyle MacLachlan's backyard, and you'll find him in an Adirondack chair, holding his son Callum and looking out over the Hollywood Hills. At Bryan Cranston's, dinner is served on the back patio, where he and wife Robin grill out. The table beneath a camphor tree is decorated with freshly picked roses from the cutting garden. The surroundings are planted with 'Veitchiana' gardenias, 'Plum Pudding' heucheras and anemones. These gardens are beautiful now, but not long ago they were in need of a major overhaul.

Jon Goldstein designs new gardens from start to finish, but he has developed a bit of a niche too, fixing gardens that suffer from a variety of ailments, from design problems to practical matters such as improper plantings and drainage issues. "When I approach a garden remodel, the first thing that I consider is, what is the architecture of the house — good and bad — and how is the garden relating to it? Oftentimes, the thing that is most needed is to take away the items that are not working, which can really open up possibilities," he says.







kyle maclachlan — who plays Dr. Orson Hodge on *Desperate Housewives* — was first introduced to Goldstein's work at Sheryl Crow's house. "I liked his attention to detail and his aesthetic," he says. It was fitting that six months later, Kyle, an avid gardener, ran into Jon at Rolling Greens, a favorite local garden boutique. When Jon first walked through Kyle's garden, the backyard was shrinking due to an invasive grove of bamboo, and there was an annoying pile of lava rock never used in the landscape. Kyle mentioned to Jon that the pool had been leaking for years, and upon further investigation, Jon realized that the original installation was not done properly. Instead of completely rebuilding, Jon resurfaced the pool, incorporated the lava rock, and created a waterfall spilling into it. Kyle next hired Jon to design a retaining wall to keep back the bamboo. The wall was built using repurposed Topanga stone from another part of the garden. Jon's next phase was to construct a guest apartment in the garden. Jon relocated climbing wisteria and roses growing in the area where the apartment now sits to the front garden. These plant migrants fit in perfectly with Kyle's collection, which includes heirloom climbing roses and David Austin English roses, such as Crown Princess Margareta™, among others.

Above left: Ferns flank the repurposed brick steps leading from the guesthouse area to the back garden. From these steps, when skies are clear, there is an amazing view of the Hollywood Hills. **Above right:** In front of the house amidst climbing wisteria and Kyle's collection of roses sit two café chairs in view of a fountain with water lilies in it. **Right:** With bamboo as a perfect backdrop, a Buddha-head statue that Kyle had held onto for years sits.



Kyle has had some of the roses shown here for 15 years. Jon relocated some of the climbing wisteria and roses to this location from the back garden when construction began on the guesthouse and parking area above it.



An arbor of Chinese wisteria, a potted hydrangea and *Eugenia* hedges surround a hammock for a sweet oasis. The decomposed granite below it replaced a poorly performing lawn. Bryan Cranston designed the water feature with the look of old walls he had seen in New England. Jon then constructed it out of Bouquet Canyon Stone.



NOTHING IS TRASH!

Repurpose plants and materials whenever you can

When Jon Goldstein started Jonny Appleseed Landscaping Inc. in 1982, "green" was just the color of the grass. Reusing materials at that time helped the then-new business owner to save money.

- **Find new places for plants** At Kyle MacLachlan's, Jon moved roses out of the way of new construction to a spot where a cherished collection of roses would fit perfectly.
- **Hold onto hardscape** At Bryan Cranston's, rather than throw it away or choose a new material, Jon reused brick that was removed from the old landscape.
- **Save the plants!** Jon pots up ailing plants and transports them to his at-home "plant hospital for the rich and famous."
- **Keep your trees** Established trees have always been of great value to Jon, so rather than cut them down and fully redo a garden, he keeps specimens in place and works them into the new design.

bryan cranston, Emmy award-winning star of *Breaking Bad*, has a house that's a traditional Colonial, a bit of a departure from what you'd expect to find in this upscale Los Angeles suburb. Bryan hired Jon because of his design approach: Match the garden to the house. "I think the garden should be an extension of the house as far as design is concerned," says Bryan. When Jon first arrived at the Cranston garden, there were drainage problems and improper pairings of plants with conflicting water needs. With water usage being a huge concern, Jon grouped plants appropriately. Shady areas now contain hydrangeas and azaleas, and the sunny beds hold Mexican marigold (*Tagetes lemmonii*) and lavender. Jon regraded the entire front garden to improve drainage.

In a tour of the garden, Cranston highlights its distinct areas, or rooms. A path through the entry gate leads to a formal English courtyard defined by Texas privet hedges. A passageway through the tall hedge leads to a tranquil room with a hammock suspended beneath Chinese wisteria as a custom stone fountain trickles nearby. The area behind the house is for entertaining guests, and has a fire pit and dining area. On the other side of the house, an open lawn is used for "goofing off," as Cranston puts it.

SEE SOURCEBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION, PAGE 76

Above: The outdoor dining table is set and topped off with freshly cut roses from the garden. The patio is constructed of reclaimed brick. **Right:** The front entry to the garden is framed with Texas privet, providing privacy with its dense structure. Snapdragons, foxgloves and delphiniums line the path leading to the front door, giving a pop of color.





Arrangements such as this one using Callery pear, by Sarah Hobden, creative director at Renny & Reed, bring out the architectural beauty of bark and branch. Says Hobden, "Even though pear doesn't last long, it's one of the earliest for forcing and one of the few pure-white flowers." Opposite: Forcing branches indoors also affords an opportunity to appreciate blossoms up close, such as this double-flowering quince.



bringing into *bloom*

Spring-flowering trees and shrubs can be pushed to blossom indoors early

STORY BY JENNY ANDREWS ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON WHITTLE ■ STYLING BY ANDIE HUBER





With buds poised for the warm days of spring to bring on a cascade of blossoms, many trees and shrubs can be coaxed into a sneak preview. Called "forcing," all it takes are timely cuts in late winter, a container of warm water and a gradual increase in room temperature to make branches of such vernal bloomers as forsythia, flowering quince, saucer magnolia, dogwoods, pussy willow, witch hazel and ornamental cherries strut their stuff indoors. Though the process can take up to a month, it's worth the effort to appreciate the delicacy of the individual blooms and the structural presence of the branches in a whole new way. Here in a cozy New York apartment, Sarah Hobden of Renny & Reed gives us a peek into the design possibilities.

For more on forcing branches, see GARDENDESIGN.COM/BRANCHES

Above: Though flowering dogwood can also be used in dramatic 8-foot-tall arrangements, Hobden here chose to create a more intimate piece. Single flowers can also be floated in a small bowl of water. Though the blossoms of forced dogwood are a bit smaller than their garden counterparts, they last longer as a cut flower, and Hobden says that to enjoy them early is worth the sacrifice in size.

Right: While dogwood can be challenging to force, forsythia is surely the easiest. The shrub is so prolific that you can cut to your heart's content without doing long-term damage to the plant. The best way to have stems with a lot of curves is to let the shrubs take their natural fountain shape without shearing them or whacking them to the ground every year. Hobden sometimes wraps a thin wire around the tips of the stems and bends them into a desired shape. She achieves elegance here by using a limited number of stems in an arrangement that is asymmetrical yet balanced.





Flowering quince is another early bloomer and one of Hobden's favorites, partly because of its rich, unusual color: "There are not many things that are coral — not quite pink and not quite orange." It also has one of the most architectural branch forms and is ideal for an arrangement of only a few stems, or even just one. Very long lasting in arrangements, quince will continue to bud out blooms, followed by leaves, and Hobden has even had branches root in the vase.



Right: With its pom-poms of pink blooms clustered toward the ends of the stems, Kwanzan cherry's long, thick branches require a substantial vase. A clear glass container also allows a look at the merlot-colored bark with its metallic sheen. **Below:** The large, individual flowers of saucer magnolia are short lived but spectacular, with pinkish-purple petal backs and creamy-white interiors. A branch with blooms at various stages, including fuzzy gray unopened buds, will be different every day as, one by one, each flower unfurls then fades.



DESIGN TIPS: SARAH HOBDEN

Floral- and event-design company Renny & Reed couldn't do without forced branches in its December-to-March repertoire. Here, creative director Sarah Hobden shares some of her tips on arranging with them.

1 Make sure to **stabilize the vase so it won't tip over**. The water will have weight, but if it's not enough, add pebbles to the bottom, which can also help hold branches in place. In a clear container, the pebbles can even add a decorative element.

2 **Look for individual stems with strong architectural quality**, and keep in mind that less can be more. With plants like flowering quince, "Sometimes all it takes is one beautiful branch."

3 For most types of trees and shrubs, **start with the largest branches first** to set the general shape, then tuck in the smaller ones for accents. As Hobden says, "I let the branches direct me." Not only does this create a balanced arrangement, it prevents dislodging fragile blossoms by jamming in large stems late in the process.

4 For vase selection, Hobden says that trial and error is often the best approach: "Don't be afraid to just try something." Choosing **a vase that's in scale is key**, and one that isn't top heavy. "Branches drink a lot, so don't pick a container that's too small or you'll be refilling it constantly."





Above: Though similar to forsythia in form, *Spiraea thunbergii* is daintier and lends itself to delicate arrangements that will showcase both the coppery bark and white-and-green flowers (detail at right). Hobden advises paying particular attention to the shapes of the branches since the flowers, which she likens to a dusting of snow, are so tiny.



Another favorite of Hobden's is flowering plum, with its pale-pink petals and burgundy stamens. The stiff branches from this tree typically need to be cut long to give the arranger plenty to work with. Here a clear vase allows the gray-barked stems to continue the arrangement under water. Related trees that make equally beautiful forced arrangements are apple, crabapple, flowering cherry and flowering almond.

HOLLYWOOD HIDEAWAY

Behind the scenes in film director R.J. Cutler's private garden

STORY BY DEBRA PRINZING ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK COYIER

Perched high in the Hollywood Hills, film director R.J. Cutler has crafted a verdant garden at his stately 1920s Spanish Colonial Revival house, literally in the shadow of the legendary Hollywood sign. Designed with generous spaces to welcome convivial get-togethers, its secluded nooks also nurture intimate conversation, and Sunday evenings typically find the filmmaker and his girlfriend, Jane Cha, a television producer, gathered with friends for dinner, drinks and lots of industry gossip.

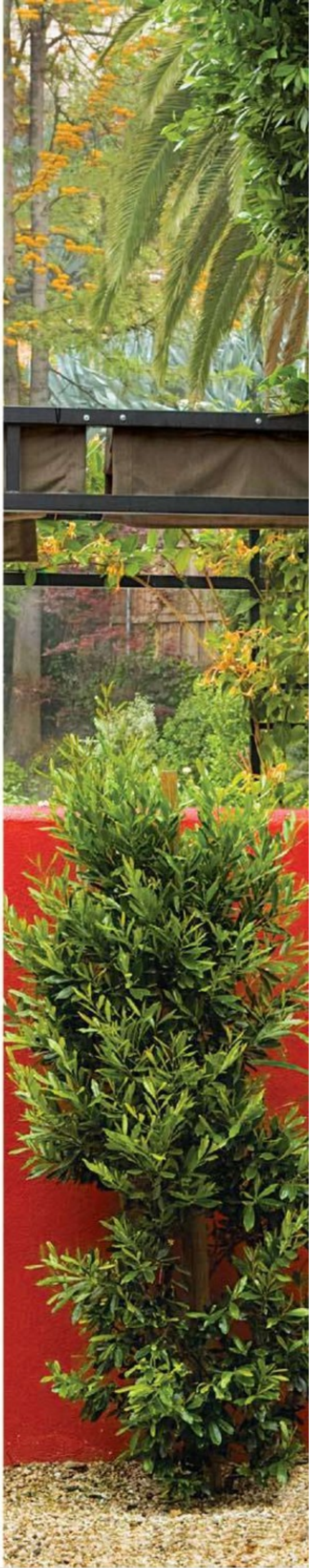
Recently the couple has been celebrating the success of *The September Issue*, Cutler's 2009 feature documentary film about the inner workings of *Vogue* magazine and its iconic editor in chief, Anna Wintour, winning a Sundance Film Festival's Excellence in Cinematography award. As producer and director, Cutler employed a favorite technique that he calls "observational filmmaking," delivering the story with a balance of visually powerful scenes and quietly expressed gestures. It's an approach paralleled in his home garden.

At Cutler's historic Hollywood property, his "garden stage" is presented in two acts — one private and one public. When the Oscar-nominated documentary veteran (*The War Room*) discovered the 4,200-square-foot house in 2005, he fell in love with its early 20th-century pedigree. He wanted to return the home to its original character and revive the garden which, says Cutler, "was just a hilly, uneven piece of land with a swing set."

Highly collaborative when it comes to his filmmaking, Cutler took a similar approach with his personal environment. For Act One, the landscape, he tapped Scott Daigre of Powerplant Garden Design, based in Los Angeles and Ojai. For Act Two, the outdoor kitchen and dining area, he enlisted Lory Johansson of Just Joh, a Los Angeles design studio, which also handled interior renovations for the house.

Cutler says he envisioned a "great, expansive exterior with a number of specifically designed areas where you could have comfort and intimacy." He discovered Daigre when he visited a small, eclectic garden previously owned by the designer and decided to replicate that feeling in his own yard. For the Cutler landscape, Daigre built an S-shaped pathway to accommodate a grade change. In one curve of the S, he added a crescent-shaped bench and circular fire pit; in the other, he planted a perennial bed. "The house and pool have square lines, so we wanted to give this space a dramatic, curvy feeling," Daigre says. "It's now all about going through a jungle of plants to get to the austere lawn."

While the lavender, daylilies, heuchera, succulents, salvia, Japanese anemones and shrub





Flanked by potted urns of Phormium, a pair of teal doors provides a grand but convivial entrance through the terra-cotta-red stucco wall that encloses film director R.J. Cutler's outdoor dining room and kitchen in the Hollywood Hills. Glimpses of the garden beyond lure visitors to explore further.



Left: Landscape designer Scott Daigre placed a vine-covered arbor at the edge of Cutler's strolling lawn to mimic the Spanish arcades of Cutler's house. **Below:** Cutler (standing), visits with guests, including his girlfriend Jane Cha (seated, right), in one of the garden's private seating areas. **Opposite:** A new flagstone path curves through the foliage-strong palette of mostly Mediterranean plants chosen by Daigre to complement the architecture and give Cutler the verdant feeling he desired.



roses are indeed wild and exuberant, they are restrained by a stucco retaining wall near the pool's flagstone patio. The plantings also screen the fire pit, which Daigre wanted to partially obscure. "You have to take a little detour off the path to find it," he points out. "This is a garden to be explored."

The sense of journey is reinforced as you move from the sinuous pathway through a vine-covered arbor echoing the Spanish arcades of Cutler's house and providing entry to the 40-by-80-foot strolling lawn. At the lawn's terminus is a hidden space that Daigre designed in response to an item on Cutler's wish list. "I knew when I saw this property that I wanted a secret garden at the back," the director says. A row of clipped Japanese privet secludes the 18-by-40-foot outdoor room from the rest of the property. An ironwork grill mounted as a window in the hedging provides a glimpse into the inner space, which is entered by turning right or left and stepping up to the room's timber-edged gravel floor.

Behind the green curtain is a mosaic-topped iron dining table and chairs, arranged beneath an old avocado tree limbed up as part canopy, part sculptural element. A small lounge area with a Balinese settee and cushions overlooks a raised fish pond. The slightly elevated chamber almost feels like a theatrical stage, casting those who gather there as actors in a performance.

Learn more about R.J. Cutler's outdoor kitchen at GARDENDESIGN.COM/CUTLER

When they began landscaping the property, Cutler and Daigre discussed adding an outdoor kitchen, although they didn't pursue the idea because it meant giving up garden space. Then Cutler became enamored with an outdoor pizza oven (and the tasty pies that came out of it) at a birthday party he attended; after raving about it, a friend suggested he turn a parking area along the street into an alfresco pizzeria of his own. Cutler liked the solution and asked Johansson, who had just completed the indoor kitchen renovations, to bring her kitchen-design expertise outdoors.

Her two-level design converted the former 20-by-30-foot parking area into a dining pavilion and bar area, and removed an unsightly mudroom not original





In a romantic niche placed next to a stone retaining wall original to the property, Jane Cha visits with designer Lory Johansson and her husband, Mats. Opposite top: The "great, expansive exterior" envisioned by Cutler is seen beyond the swimming pool, patio, perennial border and fire-pit seating area. Opposite below: Johansson selected a Balinese settee and added teal cushions and bolsters for the secret garden.

to the house to make way for an L-shaped outdoor kitchen. Now, just steps away from the back door, Cutler has a Viking grill, side burner and rotisserie, two undercounter refrigerators and an EarthStone pizza oven.

Painted terra-cotta red to match the roof tile of Cutler's house, a 6-foot stucco wall with built-in banquettes and an outdoor fireplace enclose the dining area. The space is dominated by a 16-foot-long trestle table made from reclaimed Indonesian teak. Long, movable wood benches flank either side to seat up to 20 guests.

Johansson designed a metal arbor to shelter the table, planting giant Burmese honeysuckle (*Lonicera hildebrandiana*) in pots at the base of the columns and erecting a custom Roman-shade "ceiling" overhead. Teal cushions match the home's window trim, and soften the stucco and stone surfaces. "We spend so much of the year outdoors, and I love to cook," Cutler says. "This gives me another intimate space that is fantastic for parties."

On a warm spring evening, Cutler and Cha invited an eclectic guest list that included artists, actors, lawyers, producers and others in the entertainment industry for wood-fired pizza, herb-rubbed chicken and savory grilled vegetables. Frank Sinatra's crooning voice floated through the outdoor speakers. Flickering candles and arrangements of succulents adorned the tables. A roaring fire was ablaze against the evening's chill. With wine glasses and champagne flutes in hand, some guests explored the landscape and headed to the secret garden room for predinner conversation. Others enjoyed food-as-theatre, watching chef Alberto Lazzarino, a friend of Cutler, prepare gourmet pizzas.

Under carnival lights and a star-studded sky, the scene's celebratory mood put the host-director into a contented mood. "This is a place where my friends can come, where we can celebrate new projects while entertaining outdoors," Cutler says. "I hope I'm here forever — that's my ambition."

SEE SOURCEBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION, PAGE 76



GARDEN AS THEATER: R.J. CUTLER

Seen through the lens of director R.J. Cutler, the garden is yet another dynamic medium for storytelling. "I love narrative. I love storytelling," says the boyish redhead whose signature look is a trim beard and a designer suit worn with polo shirt and colorful Nikes.

Early in his career, Cutler, 48, directed two productions of *The Secret Garden*, a musical that subsequently had a successful, two-year run on Broadway. The children's novel, written in the early 1900s by Frances Hodgson Burnett, "was one of my favorite books growing up," Cutler says of his 1970s childhood on Long Island. "I knew when I saw this house that I wanted a secret garden at the back."

Cutler is admittedly not a garden designer. He does, however, appreciate its cinematic and theatrical potential as a backdrop to human drama. "I look at my garden as a place that contains the emotional content of the experience. That's why the concept of a garden as a big, spacious environment that can encompass a lot of emotions appeals to me. I know what I want the participant to experience here."

He likens the idea to his documentary film, *The September Issue*. "You see Paris, the New York skyline, the fashion world — they are all beautiful landscapes. But then there's the intimacy of the story within those settings."







MADE IN THE SHADE

Lory Johansson wanted a versatile "roof" solution for R.J. Cutler's outdoor dining pavilion, something to protect the area from daytime sun and allow after-dark enjoyment of the moon and stars, as well as carnival lights strung from the trees.

Her inspiration? "Sitting outdoors at a European café, one with a great awning that shades you during the day but is opened to give you a relationship to the sky at night."

Johansson's custom awning is made of six 30-inch-wide panels of outdoor fabric. Grommets are spaced along the edges and down the middle of each panel through which stainless-steel cables are threaded. The panels hang side-by-side from the pavilion's steel framework. "We used a multicolored brown-and-taupe weave that has a good, reflective quality," Johansson says.

Depending upon the weather, the shades can slide open or closed using a long-handled bracket. "It's a low-tech solution, just like something you'd see in the countryside of Italy or France," she says.



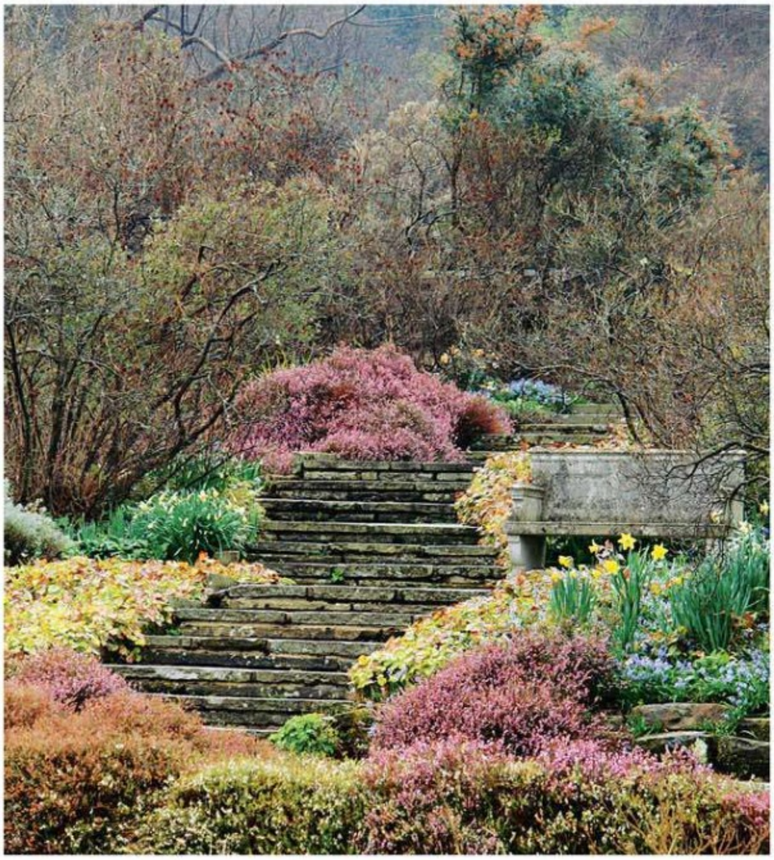
A half-circle bench provides seating at the fire pit, which is partially hidden from view by a semiwild border that includes daylilies and *Aeonium*. Opposite: Standing beneath the new arbor clad with Burmese honeysuckle vines, Cutler proposes a toast to celebrate the release of his documentary feature *The September Issue*.

groundbreaker

RICK DARKE

Showing us how to understand the natural world ... and how to grow gardens today

STORY BY BILL MARKEN ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK DARKE







Top right: With his words and photographs, Rick Darke (shown here in front of an American beech) inspires a clearer understanding of the natural world. **Above left:** A landscaped slope in an English garden originally designed by William Robinson reflects the carefree spirit of "wild gardening" — pink heaths (*Erica*) blooming along with yellow *Narcissus* and blue *Scilla*. **Above right:** Beautiful and sustainable grasses are one of Darke's specialties. Part of a 20-year-old small meadow in his Pennsylvania garden features a graceful self-sown seedling of *Panicum virgatum* 'Dalla Blues'.

Rick Darke is an author, photographer and landscape-design consultant, but perhaps more than anything else he is an observer. For nearly four decades he has observed plants, wild places, landscapes around the world, his own garden and just about any place where things grow. Through his books and lectures, he shares what he has seen and learned — helping the rest of us view the green world around us with far more understanding, appreciation and involvement.

In his new book, *The Wild Garden: Expanded Edition* (Timber Press), Darke teams up across the ages — time-machine style — with a kindred spirit: William Robinson, the revolutionary 19th-century Irish (he immigrated to England as a young man) author/naturalist/gardener whose first edition of the book appeared in 1870. Both men were ahead of their times. Darke began writing about native plants early in his career and, 10 years ago, titled a book *In Harmony With Nature: Lessons From the Arts & Crafts Garden*. Robinson advocated the

use of hardy native and exotic plants appropriate for local conditions, fighting against the trend of the day for flashy one-season-only tropicals: "Even on its votaries it is beginning to pall," as Robinson politely and understatedly decried the trend. The new edition of the classic book includes the complete text and original illustrations (engraved from line drawings and paintings by British artist Alfred Parsons) from the 1895 edition. Chapters cover topics such as "Plants Chiefly Fitted for the Wild Garden" and "Woodland Drives and Grass Walks." In addition, Darke has written new chapters explaining the significance of Robinson's thinking and added 125 evocative and illustrative color photographs of his own that bring to life Robinson's favorite plants and design concepts. The page size has been enlarged and given a square shape to better reveal the landscapes.

Why did Darke update the book? Its relevance for today had been on his mind since he encountered the full force of Robinson while writing his book on the Arts and Crafts movement more than a decade ago. He says that Robinson was a "phenomenal mind." Considered the father of the English Flower Garden, Robinson was a friend of Charles Darwin and a world traveler who rode the train across North America in 1870, absorbing wild landscapes from the New Jersey Pine Barrens to Yosemite. He recognized that resources were changing even then, and started writing about plants in ecological settings and what Darke calls the "ethics of wildness."

Much like Robinson, Darke has been moving deeper into the natural world and sustainable design as his career progresses. He grew up in New Jersey and credits his youthful respect for nature to the nearby woods of Grover Cleveland Park, where he played and walked nearly every day. The park also exposed him to sensitive naturalistic design — the work of the Olmsted Brothers, no less! He likes to recall the mountain silverbell trees (*Halesia tetraptera*) that grew there as "survivors," well-adapted role models for sustainability. Trained in science, he spent 20 years at Longwood Gardens — responsible for the extensive plant collections — and gained high-level mastery of horticulture. In the 1980s, he bought a home in the southeastern Pennsylvania countryside (about an hour from Philadelphia), where he could put into action his appreciation and understanding of the natural world.

Robinson had Gravetye Manor, a 16th-century West Sussex estate of some 1,000 acres on which he experimented with the idea of a wild garden and with his ethics of wildness. Darke has his one-and-a-half-acre garden in Pennsylvania where he observes, photographs, writes and lives out his values along with his wife and co-horticulturist Melinda Zoehrer. Their garden is a model of the natural process — constantly changing and evolving. He says, "The fun is in watching and intervening only when necessary." There's a lawn and, rather than built structures, an "organic architecture" of plants used as clerestory, layers, understory and other design functions. Darke estimates that 75 percent of the plants are Eastern regional natives, with a third to a half immediately local (from the county or township); the rest are plants from all over the world, and can harmonize with the garden and adapt to the site without becoming invasive. He doesn't use chemicals and hardly ever buys plants, giving the edge to seedlings brought in by wind, water and birds from nearby White Clay Creek Preserve: beech, ironwood, pawpaw, dogwood, witch hazel, sassafras and more. Darke assists the local plants' natural adaptation. He and Zoehrer weed mostly by hand, and before they pull out seedlings, they ask, "What is it — should it stay?" Black oak is one of their success stories. Squirrels bring in the acorns, and Darke and Zoehrer keep an eye on the seedlings and how well they develop fall color. They keep the best and pull out the rest, and now have about a dozen oaks — some as high as 8 to 10 feet tall — that are exceptionally well adapted to the area. The goal with perennials, including ground covers, is similarly adaption based: plants that renew by self-sowing, need no extra watering and provide food for birds. Standouts are *Aster divaricatus* and goldenrod, which fill in naturally, and violets, which come up in a sweep of blue and white through fallen leaves.

Darke's books also show the evolution of his thinking toward the natural and the sustainable. After his first book, *For Your Garden: Ornamental Grasses* (1994), he was on his way to becoming an expert





Above: In *The American Woodland Garden*, for the chapter "Learning from a Mountain Stream," Darke spent nearly two decades photographing Red Clay Creek in southeastern Pennsylvania — in all seasons, and in a broad range of light conditions. Here he has captured the fleeting beauty of spring (including dogwoods) and the stark clarity of winter.

on the subject and an outspoken advocate for grasses as sustainable, problem-solving landscape plants. More recently, *The Encyclopedia of Grasses for Livable Landscapes* (Timber Press, 2007) is a comprehensive, big format, 484-page opus with more than 1,000 photos by the author. It's an inspiring love song to the world's grasses: "uncommonly graceful," "sensual," "translucency" and "extraordinary diversity, durability and versatility." He also addresses major misunderstandings about grasses, particularly the perceived invasive nature of some of them, especially *Miscanthus*, which can be a weed in one locality and the best solution in another. The book also reflects his bent toward landscapes that are "livable" — dedicated to balancing resources and consumption, sustainable in cultural and ecological terms.

The American Woodland Garden (Timber Press, 2002) grew out of Darke's two decades of observing and photographing the forest near his Pennsylvania home — at all seasons, with changing light and colors, up close and at long distance. Among the many lessons: You learn about designing gardens by direct observation of nature. You "learn from a woodland stream," as one chapter puts it, or you learn by watching how the natural world frames views.

In his books and lectures, Darke has carved out a singular niche and given us a new vocabulary for what he does and how he sees the world. He calls himself a "landscape ethicist": Ethics for a landscape should frame the aesthetic and practical goals of a design. Mostly he is talking about the need for a landscape to be both dynamic and sustainable — to recognize that change is natural but also to protect and conserve what is valuable. A design should blend the biology of the site with our human demands on it. He recognizes the inherent conflicts in that, and he judges an ideal landscape through a prism of dualities: reliable but serendipitous, personal but shared, sensual but practical, local but global. For better or worse, today we rarely have natural landscapes — more like "legacy landscapes," which reflect the impact of people, with a mix of native and introduced plants in a balance that might or might not be sustainable.

Darke's opinions on native plants have evolved too. He has renewed our appreciation for natives, especially those of our deciduous forests, but at the same time helped us recognize their limits. If he were starting over, he says he'd never use the term "native plants": "[It's] too generic, too commoditized, just like the word 'organic.'" Instead he advocates a practical, results-based process for choosing the right plants for a given situation. He can't support planting natives or other plants that will need a "crutch" to survive — think of all those California gardens full of plants that need an inordinate amount of water. Looking into a more sustainable future, perhaps the role model is the silverbell tree remembered from Darke's childhood. He has 20 or so silverbells in his garden now — hardy, undemanding survivors that are easily dug and transplanted, to relocate elsewhere in the garden or to share with friends.

See gallery of other Darke images at GARDENDESIGN.COM/DARKE

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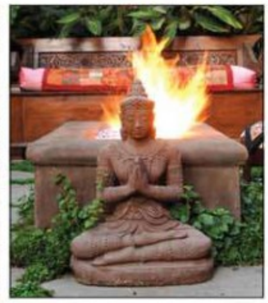
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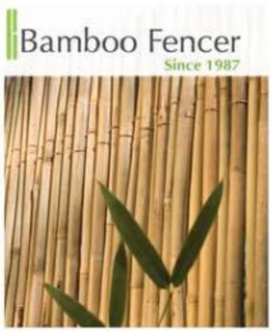
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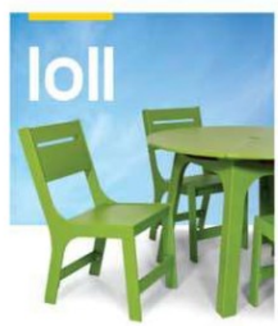
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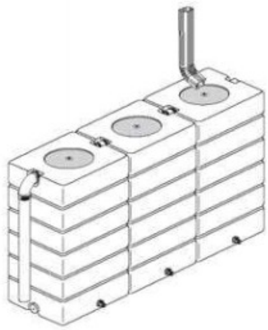
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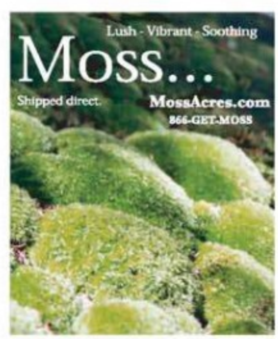
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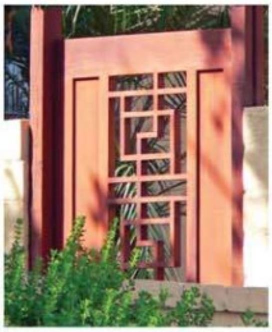
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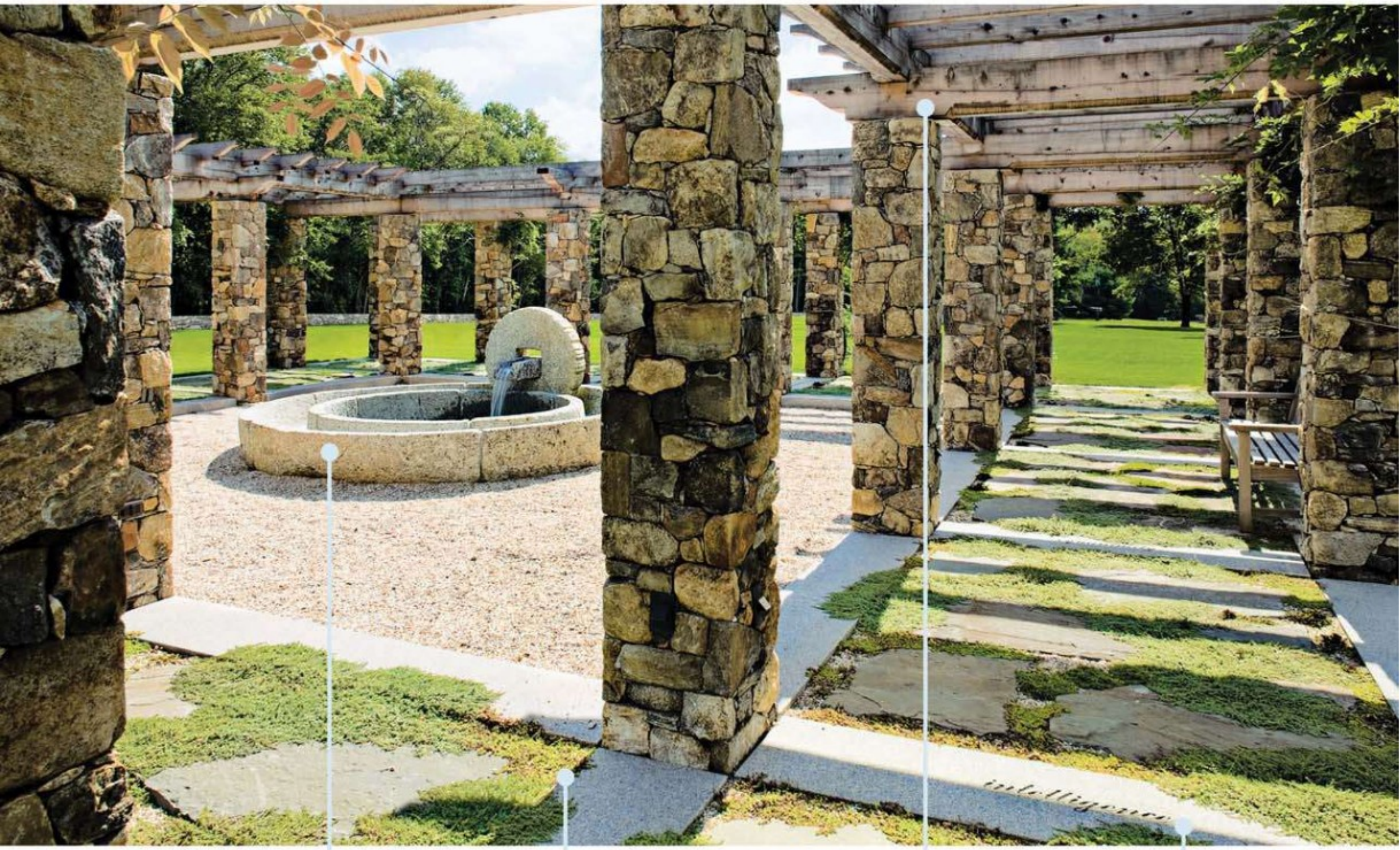
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GARDEN FOR REFLECTION

Set in an apple orchard at a Connecticut residence, this garden by Haver & Skolnick Architects recalls the courtyards of Pompeii while offering sound, scent and even words as tools for meditation **STORY BY MEGAN PADILLA**



SENSORY DEVICES

The garden's centerpiece is an 18th-century French apple press that was retrofitted into a fountain — an aesthetically cooling device. Water splashing from a granite spout fitted to the press's original millstone provides a soothing soundscape (as does a concealed sound system).

A SOFTER EDGE

Irregular-shaped fieldstones soften the architectural rigidity, as do the interspatial plantings including Irish moss, 'Tricolor' sedum and woolly thyme — which scents the air. Recessed lighting in the column bases makes the space inviting after dark.

A SHADED REFUGE

A timbered pergola of hand-carved Alaskan yellow cedar and mature wisteria form a ceiling atop the walkway that circumnavigates the 31-by-31-foot garden and provide the visitor shade. Two benches mirror one another across the garden.

SAY IT IN STONE

"Love." "Compassion." "Empathy." "Intelligence." "Integrity." "Honor." These are some of the contemplative words inscribed in the 16 cut-granite thresholds that divide the pathway between the columns clad in native fieldstone. Each word is meant to invoke an emotional response.

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